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AAP RISING
IN PUNJAB

INDIA'S SUPER
OSCAR SHOT

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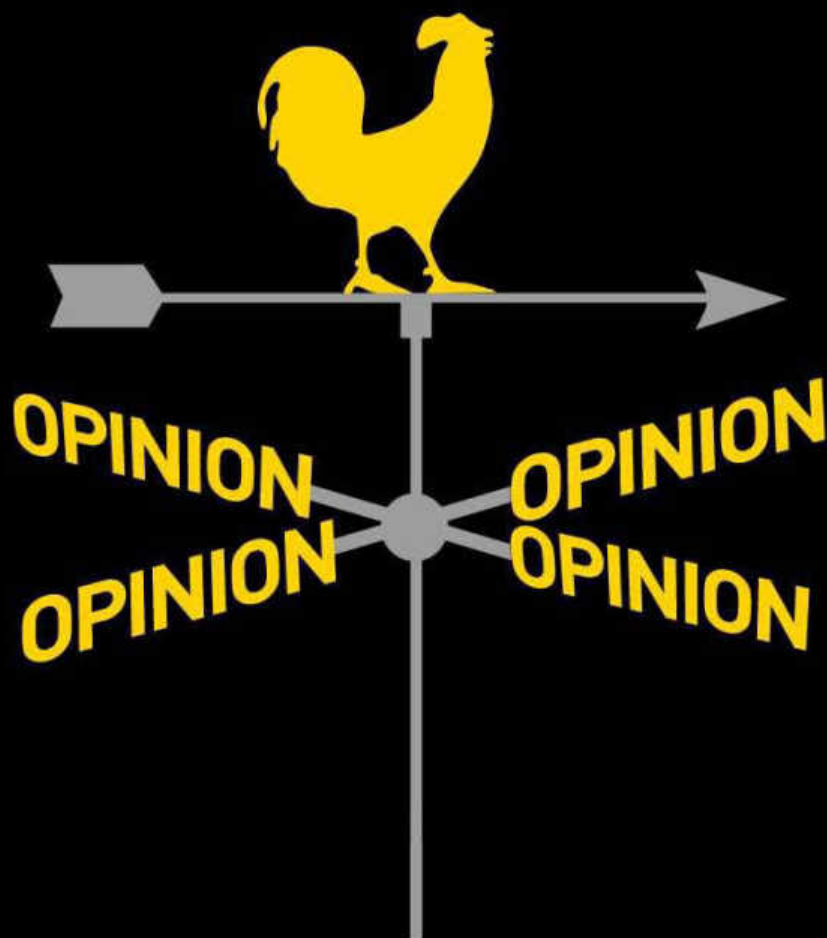
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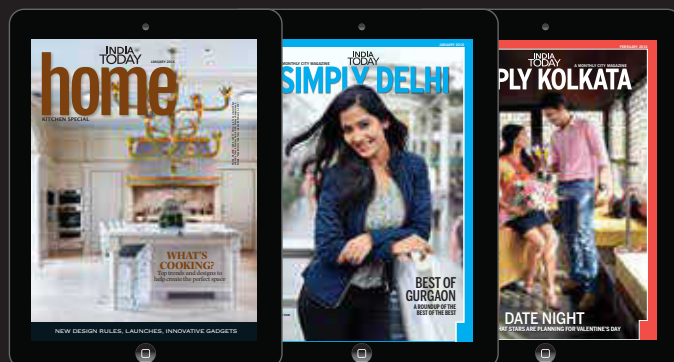
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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Even at the best of times, India's lack of planning in how to properly handle issues related to oil, gas and fuel has manifested itself in no uncertain terms. Successive governments have been guilty of an oil squeeze in which they have tried to use petroleum products—which are a necessity for transportation, industry and power generation—as a source of tax income to cut fiscal deficit. This has led to de-linking the cost of fuel from global oil prices, often resulting in the benefits of falling global rates not being transferred to consumers. Now, with pollution and climate change the buzzwords in the 21st century, the government's confused and myopic diesel policy is threatening to impact commuters, auto companies, industries and refineries, all at the same time.

A series of orders by the Supreme Court in the last few months—in response to rising pollution in India that has landed 13 of our cities on the list of 20 most polluted cities in the world—has put diesel firmly under the cosh. Though these decisions, most notable among them the ban on the sale of all new diesel vehicles with more than 2,000 cc engines, are restricted to Delhi, the larger message is clear. Diesel is no longer the flavour of the month as a fuel of choice for vehicles. In fact, its days are numbered.

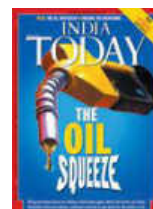
While this may be all very well given how diesel is a more harmful pollutant when compared with petrol, especially with the poorer emission norms in India as compared with other developed countries, the problem is that this is not new information. Despite knowing the realities of diesel, India actively supported the manufacture and purchase of diesel vehicles for more than a decade. The imbalance was such that several leading companies—including Maruti Suzuki and Honda, which did not rely on selling diesel cars until recently—set up new plants at a great cost to cater to the booming diesel market.

The new sentiment against diesel is shaking up the transportation sector. The government's policies had ensured that the use of diesel had risen 16 per cent in October, 2015 compared to the previous year. The fuel comprised 42 per cent of India's petroleum basket in 2014-15 and powered over 60 per cent of India's cars, buses, tractors and trucks. The principal reason for this 'dieselisation' was that diesel was 40 per cent cheaper than petrol—in real terms by as much as Rs 32 per litre in May 2014—though the gap has gradually reduced to Rs 14 today. With diesel being demonised all of a sudden, the system has been jolted.

At the same time, diesel continues to power private gen sets that use unrefined engines as compared to automobiles, and as a more efficient fuel in terms of mileage, will continue to be used by trucks and tempos in a fast-developing country like India. One option is to speedily implement the Euro VI norms across the country on a war footing by getting the auto industry and oil companies on board. But there are logistical problems in this that won't be easy to overcome.

Our cover story, written by Deputy Editor MG Arun, examines the devil in the diesel. Talking to consumers and stakeholders across the oil sector, we bring you a tale of skewed priorities, sleeping at the wheel, and hasty decisions. We also give ways to solve the crisis. There is a lot of fuel in this fire, poured by none other than our own policymakers. It is a mess of our own making for which we are paying a heavy price.

That apart, India Today Group is happy to announce the first India Today Art Awards, to be held in New Delhi on January 28, in which winners will be picked from open nominations by an eminent 10-member jury committed to preserving and propagating art. This is our attempt to make art less intimidating and turn it into an inclusive, accessible medium of expression for all.



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(Aroon Purie)



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Once a miracle fuel powering half the world's vehicles, green concerns have made diesel a pariah, taking India by surprise.

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Cover by **ROHIT CHAWLA**

Digital Imaging by **AMARJEET SINGH NAGI**

Who to Deal With in Pakistan

JANUARY 18, 2016

The Pathankot attack deals a severe blow to Indo-Pak diplomacy



“An ‘It’s the Pak army, stupid’ approach is essential for tackling cross-border terrorism with Pakistan. Dealing with a frail civilian government, which is a puppet of the army and the ISI, will hardly yield dividends for India.”

KANGAYAM R. NARASIMHAN, *Chennai*

Shake your fists

What was the Border Security Force (BSF) doing when terrorists were entering the airbase at Pathankot in Punjab? (How to Deal with Pakistan?) When I hear the term BSF, what comes to my mind is the flag lowering ceremony executed every single day. What has it achieved? Nothing. At the end of the day, before the sun sets, the flag has to be lowered. A soldier is deployed to lower the flag, fold it and bring it back. Period. The BSF jawan goes to bang shut the Wagah gate, raise his fist at the Pakistani side and raise his knee up to his nose. The same is reciprocated by the Pakistani side. These meaningless, laughable and primitive gestures are not going to help society. For peace, the first criterion is to have peaceful thoughts. Instead of focusing on ostentatious routines, we need to explore cultural programmes that can foster the bonding of people on both sides of the border.

VENKATESAN ANNASWAMY,
Chennai



Taking lit too far

The uproar in China (Lost in Translation) about best-selling Chinese author Feng Tang’s recent translation of Tagore’s *Stray Birds* (published in 1916) is an interesting development. Trained in medicine, the 44-year-old Feng (real

name Zhang Haipeng), who dubs himself a poet, is reported to have considered Tagore “irreverent”, his verse not “soft, gentle”, and that he “also speaks of love, and of making love”. In this context, Feng’s sexualised rendering of some of Tagore’s verses, although preposterous, is not surprising. What is surprising is that, out of Tagore’s 326 ‘haiku-like’ verses, only in three translations has he been able to “closely reflect Tagore’s own brevity” in appropriate “profanity-littered language”. Tang’s perceived closeness to Tagore’s work may explain the absurdity of it all. MANOJ GHOSH, *Kolkata*

Defence minister Manohar Parrikar has now admitted to some “gaps” in security and also that he was “worried” about terrorists sneaking into the base. Did he wonder on whether NSG deployment was needed in a cantonment town with massive availability of local army force, including specialised units? There has, over the years, been

an unfortunate tendency in New Delhi to project the NSG as a necessary component of response to any major terrorist incident, to the neglect and marginalisation of locally available forces. This is unfortunate. Locally available first responders should be given priority in all such engagements.

J. AKSHAY, *Bengaluru*

Has anybody kept count of the number of meetings held at different levels between India and its theocratic neighbour since August 14, 1947? Right from the Nehru-Liaquat Ali Pact, all the talks that were held till date have failed to produce any tangible result. The intransigent attitude of the religious bigot continues unabated. It is like hoping to see greenery in the Sahara desert. VINEET PHADTARE, *Mumbai*

Indian diplomacy will have to take a new route to address the issue. Such a route needs to not only engage the political head but the military head of Pakistan as well. India will have to keep the Pakistan military engaged in such a manner that political goals and geographical issues are sorted out with the consent of both the political and military rulers there. Herein lies the challenge to the statesmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who must have realised by now that an occasional stopover in the neighbouring country will not yield him any result.

The BJP will have to come up with a strategy that is different from the Congress and the PM will have to implement it. Only then will he be remembered in the history of India as a statesman par excellence. Merely being critical of the previous regime without tackling the issue and achieving a breakthrough will take him nowhere.

RAJESH SAHAY, *New Delhi*

All bets are on Lodha

The recommendation that betting on cricket be legalised is a bold one. After all, gambling has been a part of India's ethos since the time of the Pandavas. On occasions such as Diwali, people even legitimately allow themselves the pleasure of playing a game of cards for 'fun'. Currently, betting in horse racing and lottery tickets are legal in India. So, why should betting on sports not be legalised, especially in the case of cricket, which is played and followed like a religion in this part of the world? It is time for lawmakers to mull over setting up a national-level gambling regulatory authority along the lines of the UK Gambling Commission.

K.S. PADMANABHA,
Secunderabad



By and large, the Indian cricket fraternity can now sigh in relief over the contents of the Lodha

Committee report. The panel had kept the BCCI on tenterhooks for months. Now we know why. Its suggestions are radical and well-conceived. All along, the BCCI has functioned as a mutual benefit society but managed to silence its critics by taking credit for the spectacular popularity and growth of the sport, including its revenues. We look forward to sweeping reforms and an administrative shake-up.

K.S. JAYATHEERTHA, *Bengaluru*

The not-so-free Internet

China doesn't allow Facebook. Just because India does, that doesn't mean the country should welcome Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg's plan to carve the Internet into

pocketboroughs, let alone his preaching that this is a great way to connect a billion people to their digital future. A whopping 300 million Indians are already connected to the Internet and more will follow as smartphone and data costs are dropping. To ensure that more Indians can connect to the Internet for free or at affordable rates, it is not Facebook or Free Basics but the government's Digital India project that holds the key.

A. MEGHANA, *via email*

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, which had sought comments on the concept of providing certain Internet data services free of cost, has rightly expressed frustration at the manner in which Facebook has sought to subvert the feedback process. It used its social platform to lure barely-informed people into expressing their 'love' for its service named 'Free Basics'. The TRAI was inundated with template-based e-mails supporting the Facebook proposal. This in itself constitutes a demonstration of how a stranglehold over social media can be used to manufacture public opinion. The bigger question remains: is this charity even needed?

P. ARIHANTH, *Secunderabad*

The Great Oil Sham

You could say everybody loves a fuel price hike for it affords them a chance to be politically relevant. To be fair, a section of Congressmen and UPA allies argued that the Centre should simply trim down its taxes and neutralise the impact of prices. Deora, interestingly, was among the believers. Chidambaram then pointed out that the arithmetic of coalition spending did not match its political beliefs. Very simply, unless he collected these taxes he would not be able to fund the ambitious social schemes of the UPA regime like the Rs 10,000-crore employment guarantee scheme or the Bharat Nirman programme. On his part, Deora presented the fait accompli, stating that PSUs could go into the red unless they were compensated for at least a portion of the Rs 73,500 crore they claimed were the under-recovery. Very simply, under-recovery is the difference between the real price and the price realised by oil companies for goods sold.

The Left parties and many in the UPA regime doubt the claim. Dipankar Mukherjee of the CPM argued in a note that the figure was opaque: "This is a notional figure and not actual." Mukherjee asks how the PSUs could be in trouble when they were declaring profits and paying dividends to the government despite claiming under-recoveries of Rs 19,910 crore in 2004-05. There is also the belief that the figures presented by PSU chiefs were calculated on the basis of the import parity price and ignore the subsidies received by them and the discounts delivered by ONGC.

by Shankkar Aiyar

June 2006



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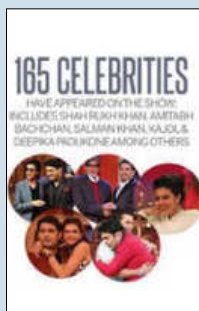
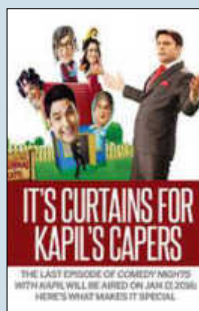
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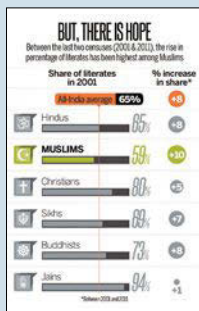
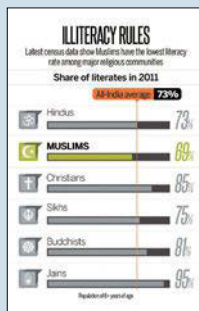
Odds Delhi has to even out for Clean Air As emissions hit a new high, Delhi government takes stock of pollution levels with a scheme. <http://bit.ly/1Nfj9CV>



It's Curtains for Kapil's Capers Comedy Nights with Kapil, the highest rated TV show in India, was a laugh riot that had families hooked to screens. <http://bit.ly/1RZGnTX>



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PUTTING MOTHERHOOD ON HOLD

Former Miss World Diana Hayden had frozen her eggs eight years ago because she wanted to put motherhood on hold. Now, at 42, she's given birth to a healthy baby girl.

About two years ago, a teenage girl, with a history of a malignant ovarian tumour, was referred to me. She already had got that ovary removed and was going to start chemotherapy. Her parents couldn't believe that this kind of a thing could happen to someone so young. Once the chemotherapy would be completed, her remaining ovary would shut down permanently and she would never produce ova and hence there would be no possibility of motherhood for her. Her only hope for having a child later was if we were to retrieve her eggs, freeze them and thaw them later for fertilisation. We managed to help them raise some money for the procedure, and performed a quick egg vitrification for her. Women affected with ovarian cancer produce very few eggs, but luckily we managed to salvage eight of her eggs to have them frozen and stored at our facility for when she will be old enough and will want to start a family.

The egg vitrification technology, now a standard procedure conducted at most good infertility clinics across the country, can be used judiciously in medical conditions such as these. But now it's also being increasingly performed in cases where women are making lifestyle choices to delay pregnancies. Women in India have the legal prerogative to be single mothers and there is an increasing number of women who are making this choice. It's still not a very large percentage of our clientele, but we have catered to about 100 women in the past few years.

The first baby using a frozen sperm was born in 1953, and in 1978, Louis Brown became the first child to be born through the in vitro fertilisation (IVF) technique. Earlier, IVF was performed only during the natural cycle and no external hormones were used. With the use of injectable hormones, it became possible for the patient to produce 20-30 eggs at a time, ensuring the procedure was less wasteful. The first test tube baby in India was born very close on the heels of the first IVF baby in the world. Subhash Mukhopadhyay's experiments led to the birth of Durga in Kolkata, 67 days after Louis Brown was born. Mukhopadhyay had a friend who had a vegetable freezing facility. The physician used this technology to freeze embryos and put them back in the

womb of Durga's mother.

In the mid 1980s, embryos were being frozen through a very slow process, which took two to three hours. It wasn't very successful because the embryos contain a lot of water which would crystallise inside the cells and damage the embryo. Freezing of eggs with this technology also gave varying results as the egg is the largest cell in our body and in order to freeze it successfully, we must rid it of all the water. The advent of vitrification, or instant freezing of the egg, has made it a viable procedure. With the science more exact now, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) no longer labels egg freezing as experimental, recognising it as a standard procedure.

Egg-freezing must ideally be done before the patient turns 35. A woman's fertility peaks between the age of 24 and 34. During this time, the eggs are young and have undergone less genetic ageing.

There is no longer a taboo attached to the procedure. Fortunately, I have patients from all sections of society. Women who aren't so well-informed don't hesitate to come forward to find out more about freezing their eggs until they find the right person to marry. As people interact on social media and as awareness spreads across society, the barriers are gradually breaking.

In 2005, we had a woman in her mid-30s who came to us for egg freezing. We used a somewhat different procedure from the instant freezing that we do these days and froze 15 eggs for her. Seven years later she remarried and

came for the fertilisation of the eggs that we had previously frozen. Today she has a lovely daughter.

But I'd like to offer a word of caution. Once you have crossed a certain age, freezing the eggs becomes a less viable option. Sometimes I have women aged between 38 and 41 coming to me to freeze their eggs because they haven't been able to find the right partner. But the quality of their eggs has already deteriorated and the chances of recovery post-thawing reduces drastically. Also, sometimes freezing eggs from just one cycle, which gives about seven to eight eggs, isn't enough. It is a safer option to freeze between 15 and 20 eggs, which may require the patient to do perhaps two to three cycles, particularly in the case of an older patient.



Women in India have the legal prerogative to be single mothers and there is now an increasing number of them who are using technology to make this lifestyle choice.

As told to Moeena Halim.

Dr Firuza Parikh is the Director, IVF and Genetics Centre, Jaslok Hospital

EXPRESS SERVICE

The bullet train may yet be a pipe dream for Indian Railways, but railway minister Suresh Prabhu has electrified passengers with his department's swift response to real-time requests for milk, wheelchairs and even diapers. Prabhu's Twitter cell in his New Delhi headquarters ensures this by tagging the relevant zonal general manager to each tweet, usually while trains are en route. But the avalanche of social media complaints has become a nightmare for the department heads in the 11 railway zones who have to respond to ordinary complaints as well. The infrastructure that needs urgent upgrading, railway staffers joke, is the manpower crunch to address Twitter traffic.



Illustration by SAURABH SINGH

OLD WOUNDS

Congress leader **Raj Babbar** is not one to forget rivalries. He recently snubbed UP CM Akhilesh Yadav when the latter requested that he accompany his theatre personality wife Nadira Babbar on stage to receive an award. The UP CM was chief guest at the Jahan-e-Kaifi Azmi award function held on January 14. Babbar, however, remained seated. Yadav later made light of the incident in his speech wondering why Babbar, who was twice an SP MP, hadn't forgotten old disputes and how he had stayed in the actor's house during his first visit to Mumbai.



RANJAN RAHI



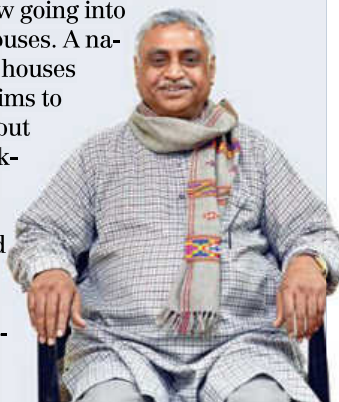
MEDICAL SCARECROW

Among Bihar health minister Tej Pratap Yadav's first initiatives was a crackdown on spurious drugs makers and quacks claiming quick-fixes for hair growth and increasing height. Yadav's department has conducted more than 80 raids since December but, of late, medicine sellers have hit

upon an ingenious device. They have put up posters and banners of Tej Pratap Yadav in their shops and on roads leading to their outlets, apparently to flaunt their political connections. Though there has been no record of it having repelled a raiding team so far, the merchants do hope to win some ministerial goodwill.

RSS FEED

The RSS, which had shunned the media for most of its existence, is now going into the nuts and bolts of media houses. A nationwide workshop for media houses which began on January 15 aims to correct media perceptions about the Sangh. The first of its workshops, organised by the Akhil Bhartiya Prachar Pramukh Manmohan Vaidya, addressed a reporter and a sub-editor from every major publication. Sangh insiders believe sub-editors twist their stories.



CHANDRADEEP KUMAR



DON'T ROCK THE BJP BOAT

BJP president **Amit Shah** is treading on eggshells these days. He has so far not interfered in any of the elections for presidents of the 20 state party units that have been underway since mid-December. These include party units in key BJP-ruled states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana and Maharashtra. Shah is keen for a second term as BJP president, so he needs all the support he can get. Elections for party president will begin after the state unit elections.

NOT ME, MODI

Two BJP leaders from Bihar, Shahnawaz Hussain and Sushil Kumar Modi, are in the fray for the single Rajya Sabha seat likely to be won by the party from the state in March this year. Hussain recently steered clear of comment on who would be nominated for the seat. "Names appearing in the media are unlikely to be given a ticket," Shahnawaz told mediapersons at a recent function in Delhi, helpfully volunteering Sushil Modi's name instead.



COURTING CONTROVERSY

In his desperate attempt to return to power for a record fourth time, Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi has been trying to turn adversity into opportunity. Earlier this month, Gogoi had levelled corruption charges against his former aide Himanta Biswa Sarma, now a BJP member. Sarma filed a defamation case against Gogoi and the case came up for hearing in a civil court in Guwahati on January 18. Though the court did not summon the chief minister, Gogoi was not only personally present at the court premise, he was also joined by state Congress president Anjan Dutta and scores of foot soldiers. The point was proved—Gogoi is unlikely to forgo a photo opportunity. Interestingly, Sarma was not present in the court.

FREE FOR ALL by Saurabh Singh

NEW DESIGN OF THE TENNIS BALL



TAILING APPS

Arvind Kejriwal's Delhi government and the Delhi police that reports to Rajnath Singh's Union home ministry may have been on the same page on the odd-even car scheme to reduce pollution but they do differ on sharing credit. The AAP government launched an advertising blitz claiming its 15-day formula was a success. The Delhi police followed it up by launching an app for traffic management. Delhi government advertisements on FM radio are closely followed by Delhi traffic police ads. The police have gone a step ahead and launched a reward point and a car for the winner of its traffic management plan.



YASBANT NEGI

NEIGHBOUR'S ENVY

A new logo and a video campaign for Rajasthan Tourism, launched by CM Vasundhara Raje on January 16, have generated buzz for its minimalist logo and offbeat theme. The five-video campaign focuses on places away from the beaten tour-



ist circuit—the stark beauty of deserts and the Chambal ravines. The campaign, done by Ogilvy and Mather, is part of the chief minister's effort to highlight locations beyond the much sold palaces and forts, reason why her government hired the ad agency that did the catchy '*Hindustan ka dil dekho*' tourism campaign for Madhya Pradesh in 2007.

A SUITABLE SURVEY



Pakistan is China's favourite neighbour, reveals an online survey by *Global Times*. The Communist party paper says that Japan and India were voted as countries China would like to stay away from. Not everyone accepted the results. One Beijing media critic noted that

the paper's surveys often echoed China's foreign policy priorities. A *Global Times* survey in December found "95 per cent of people" supported the government's expulsion of a French journalist for writing about China's crackdown in western Xinjiang.

with ANSHUMAN TIWARI, PIYUSH BABELE, ANANTH KRISHNAN, ASHISH MISRA, AMITABH SRIVASTAVA, ROHIT PARIHAR, SANTOSH KUMAR AND KAUSHIK DEKA



LET'S BE GOOD SAMARITANS

The government is soon going to notify standard operating procedures for protection of people who help accident victims, making it binding on all. Will it bring the change?



THE NEW SET OF PROCEDURES WOULD OFFER THE BENEFACITOR THE FOLLOWING PROTECTION



No civil or criminal liability



No compulsion to disclose identity



No harassment by police



No registration fee demanded by the hospital authorities



Disciplinary action to be taken against officials who force a person to reveal his/her identity

INDIA HAS THE LARGEST NUMBER OF ROAD-RELATED DEATHS IN THE WORLD



Every hour, **15 people** die in traffic accidents in India

NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO DIED IN A ROAD ACCIDENT

1.42 LAKH



2014

1.37 LAKH



2013

BUT MOST DEATHS ARE PREVENTABLE



According to the Law Commission of India, at least **50 per cent of fatalities can be prevented** if accident victims receive medical attention within the critical first hour of the accident

NO HELP



74%

bystanders are unlikely to assist an injured person on the road, says a study across seven Indian cities by SaveLIFE Foundation

WHY IS IT SO?

Police questioning and harassment

Lack of cooperation from hospital authorities



Court appearances

MANY FIRST WORLD COUNTRIES HAVE GOOD SAMARITAN LAW



In France, anyone who fails to help a person in danger is liable for civil and criminal liability

In Germany, failure to provide first aid is punishable. Moreover, anyone who provides help will not be prosecuted even if it made the situation worse.

Sources: Indian Express, NDTV, NCRB

Story: Priya Kapoor

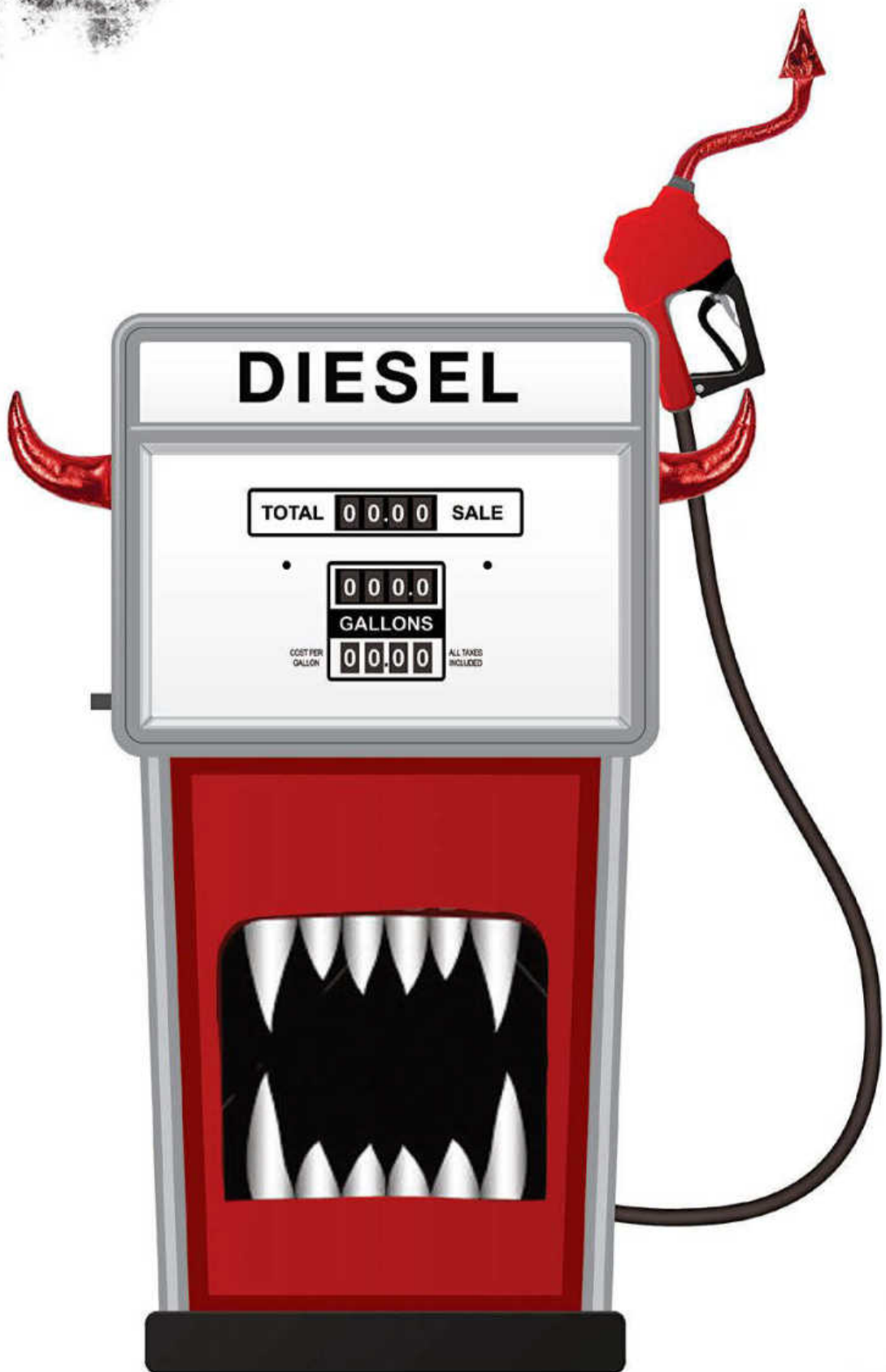


Illustration by SAURABH SINGH

COVER STORY **DIESEL**

DEVIL IN THE DIESEL

DRIVEN BY GREEN CONCERNS, THE SUPREME COURT IN A SERIES OF ORDERS HAS MADE DIESEL A PARIAH AND PUT THE BRAKES ON THE INDIA'S AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY. CAN ADOPTING THE LATEST CLEAN ENERGY NORMS SAVE THE DAY?

| By M.G. Arun |

It was a double whammy last year for Jaswant Singh, 53, a taxi driver in New Delhi. In April 2015, when in a move to curb pollution, environment watchdog National Green Tribunal (NGT) banned all diesel vehicles older than 10 years from Delhi's roads, Singh had to sell his taxi for a song. He then borrowed money, bought a used Tata Indigo diesel car and joined a fleet taxi service. Bad luck almost struck again when the NGT proposed a ban on all diesel cars in the national capital. Later, the Supreme Court (SC) modified the ban to include diesel cars above 2,000 cc capacity only, mostly in the luxury segment, and ordered all taxis to convert to compressed natural gas (CNG), a cleaner fuel, before March 2016. But installing a CNG kit in a car costs anywhere between Rs 65,000-70,000, an expensive business for Singh, who earns less than Rs 1,000 a day.

Singh's dilemma illustrates how finding alternatives to the highly polluting diesel, though inevitable, can be a costly proposition. The Supreme Court's (SC) orders are widely seen as an end game for cars driven by diesel, at least in the major metros

where smog, air pollution and lung diseases have resulted in a new sentiment against the fuel (use of the fuel in India had risen over 16 per cent in October 2015 to 6.34 million tonnes (mt) from 5.45 mt a year ago, the most since August 2005).

There are some 50,000 diesel taxis plying on Delhi roads on any given day, burning 10 lakh litres of diesel, and a ban will throw the lives of so many families, such as that of Singh, out of gear. Add to that another 5.2 lakh (0.52 million) private diesel cars, and the scale of the issue becomes evident. On January 5, the SC refused relief to auto-makers who challenged its order, and upheld the ban on new luxury diesel cars. Going a step ahead, the court questioned the need for the government to use diesel cars over five years old, setting the stage to retire them. Although these are orders specific to Delhi, the day is not far when other states will resort to drastic measures

to curb diesel pollution. The future of diesel, a fuel that comprised 42 per cent of India's petroleum basket in 2014-15 (at 70 mt), seems enveloped in smog.

THE FALL FROM GRACE

The Supreme Court verdict was the culmination of a buzz that has been building against the use of diesel for over a decade. According to multiple surveys ranging from the World Health Organisation (WHO) to the Indian Institutes of Technology in Delhi, Kanpur and Mumbai, Delhi is the most polluted city in the world. A Delhi resident is exposed annually to an average of 153 micrograms per cubic metre of PM 2.5, the smallest and most harmful of all measurable particulate material. This is 15 times higher than WHO's recommended annual average, causing respiratory disorders in vulnerable sections, especially during winter.

Diesel emissions are the worst

among all vehicular pollutants, studies say. Diesel vehicles emit high levels of deadly particles and nitrogen dioxide, linked to asthma, bronchitis, heart attacks, strokes and growth deficiencies in babies. Recent reports say that compared to a petrol engine, diesel emits four times more nitrogen dioxide and 22 times more harmful particulates, although it produces around 15 per cent less carbon dioxide. Moreover, the sulphur present in diesel leads to the formation of sulphur dioxide, which irritates the nose, throat and airways to cause cough, wheezing and shortness of breath.

A total of 1,15,945 diesel-driven commercial vehicles, including trucks and buses, enter and exit Delhi every day, through the 127 entry points in the national capital. However, there were no curbs on them until the apex court banned the illegal entry of trucks into the metro in its recent order. Diesel powers close to 60 per cent of Indian cars, buses, tractors and trucks. Trucks guzzled over 28 per cent of diesel sold, followed by cars and utility vehicles at over 21 per cent, tractors at 13 per cent, buses at 10 per cent, and three-wheelers at over 6 per cent. Other big users such as diesel gensets—in agriculture, homes, offices and shops—followed by the railways, aviation, shipping and mobile towers, all keep contributing to the rampant pollution.

THE SPEEDBREAKER

For companies such as Mercedes Benz India, Toyota Kirloskar and Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M), which derive much of their business from diesel SUVs, the Supreme Court order comes as a devastating blow. "The absence of a fuel policy has been telling," says R.C. Bhargava, chairman, Maruti Suzuki. "Now, suppose they decide to ban all diesel cars. It will impact all of us very badly."

According to industry experts, about 4 lakh units of diesel vehicles with 2,000 cc or higher capacity engines are sold in the country annually, of which 5-8 per cent is sold in Delhi and the NCR. Some of the worst affected car models are M&M's TUV 300, XUV 500 and Scorpio, Maruti

GETTYIMAGES



IN 2014, DIESEL GENSETS IN FACTORIES AND OFFICES GENERATED 90,000 MW OF POWER, OR 36 PER CENT OF THE COUNTRY'S TOTAL INSTALLED CAPACITY AT THE TIME.



HCV/LCV
28.25%



TRACTORS, AGRI
IMPLEMENTS
AND AGRI PUMPSETS
13.00%



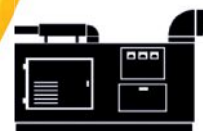
CARS & SUV
PRIVATE
13.15%



BUSES
9.55%



CARS & SUV
COMMERCIAL
8.94%



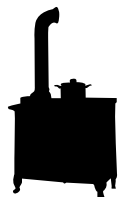
OTHERS (GENSET
FOR NON-INDUSTRY)
& OTHERS
6.45%



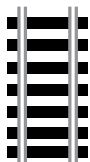
3 WHEELERS-
PASSENGER/
GOODS
6.39%



INDUSTRY-OTHER PURPOSES
4.96%



INDUSTRY-
GENSET
4.06%



3.24%
RAILWAYS



MOBILE TOWER
1.54%



AVIATION/SHIPPING
0.47%

HOW DIESEL IS USED IN INDIA

WHILE ROAD VEHICLES STILL CORNER A
MAJOR SHARE, ITS MYRIAD USES EVEN IN
SECTORS LIKE SHIPPING AND
MOBILE TOWERS SHOW HOW
INDISPENSABLE IT IS

Graphic by AZAD MOHAN

Suzuki's S Cross, the Hyundai Creta, Renault's Duster and Toyota's Innova. All of M&M's successful models are fuel-guzzling diesel SUVs. For German luxury carmaker Mercedes-Benz and the Tata Motors-owned JLR, their entire diesel model range is powered by engines above 2,000 cc.

M&M chairman Anand Mahindra, for one, was quite sanguine after the SC diktat. "I have always believed that the Supreme Court is an institution that sustains our faith in social justice and democracy in India," he said. "So even if we believe the decision on diesel vehicles isn't optimal, we'll honour it and develop vehicles that comply with their stipulations." Toyota Kirloskar Motor's vice-chairman Vikram Kirloskar was a bit more circumspect, saying the authorities should "take a comprehensive view of various factors causing pollution" rather than just target the auto sector.

CAN WE DISCARD DIESEL?

For an emerging country like India, also one of the fastest growing, a rise in diesel use is inevitable, especially in long distance and heavy transportation. Much of the activity in manufacturing, which is in tune with the Make in India programme, will happen away from the cities, creating new demand for transportation, and therefore, diesel. It does not come as a surprise, then, that the government has decided to leapfrog to implementing Euro VI emission standards by April 2020, skipping the Euro V phase, so that future development is in harmony with environmental concerns.

Experts also say that each fuel type has a unique profile of emissions with its own pros and cons. All vehicles emit different pollutants, with petrol vehicles emitting higher carbon monoxide compared to diesel, while diesel vehicles emit higher PM10 compared to petrol vehicles. "Comparing the particulate matter from diesel with petrol is not appropriate and drawing conclusions from the same is not desirable. In view of this, future emission regulations have moved to particulate number in place of mass of particulate matter," says Tim Leverton, president & head, advanced and product

engineering at Tata Motors, part of the \$100 billion Tata group.

Although India is the fourth largest energy consumer in the world, per capita consumption of diesel is still low (so it can only go up). "In the future, diesel is more likely to remain the preferred highway transportation fuel, but its importance as an urban fuel may diminish," says George Paul, executive director, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd, India's second largest petroleum retailer. The only way it can continue to hold some sway in urban transport is by adhering to emission norms at the earliest. Kirit Parikh,

founder director and emeritus professor at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, proposes that diesel be priced higher than or at par with petrol so that people lose the incentive to use them in their cars.

THE FORMER 'MIRACLE' FUEL

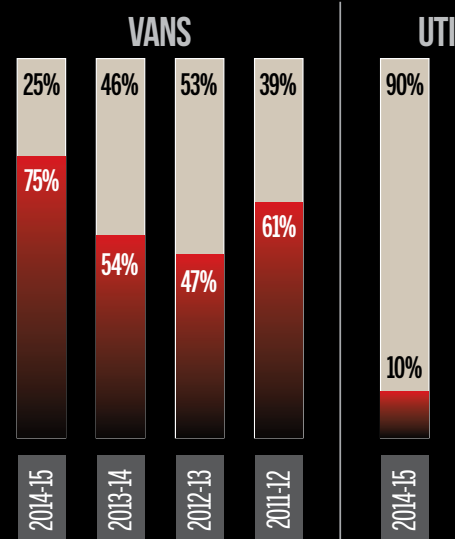
The origin of diesel as a fuel can be traced back to 1892, when German scientist and inventor Rudolf Diesel designed an internal combustion engine where high temperatures ignited fuel in a combustion chamber that powered the engine. Diesel combustion, enhanced over the years, was

SHIFTING GEARS

THE SC ORDERS WILL HIT DIESEL VEHICLES ACROSS THE SPECTRUM

PETROL ■ DIESEL ■

Sale of diesel vehicles as compared to petrol variants
Source: SIAM



found to be more efficient than other fuels, resulting in 20 per cent better fuel mileage and lower emissions of carbon dioxide, considered a major cause for ozone depletion and climate change. Strict emission standards in Europe have forced oil refineries to dramatically reduce the sulphur content in diesel. All new cars sold in Europe must meet Euro VI standards for exhaust emissions of nitrogen dioxide and other pollutants, the latest in a progressive emission control measure practiced in the continent since 1992. Diesel cars make up around 20 per cent of new cars sold globally, up

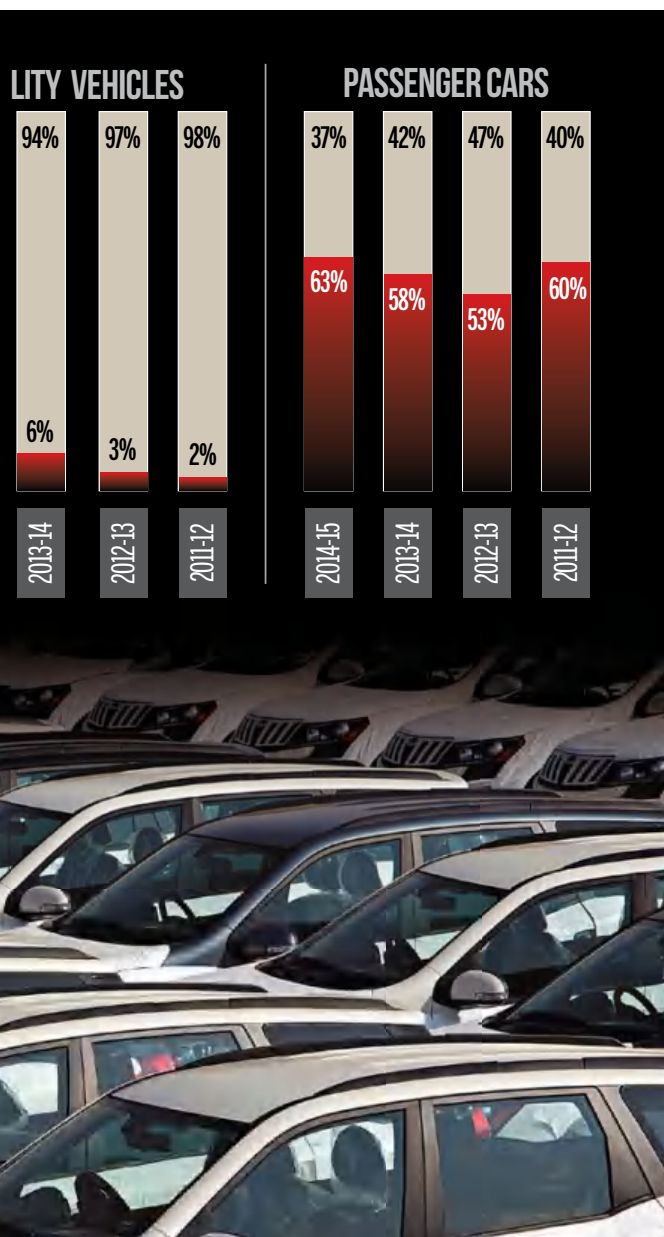
from low single digits a decade ago. In its use of diesel in transportation, India matches Europe, where half the cars sold every year are diesel. But they account for less than 2 per cent in China, the US and Japan, where the fuel is largely considered dirty.

The Volkswagen episode brought the fuel under further under close scrutiny of governments and regulators. In September 2015, the German car maker acknowledged that it tampered with 11 million diesel-powered cars using a software to help them meet stringent American emission standards, a move that led to CEO

Martin Winterkorn's resignation, a \$26 billion erosion in VW's share value in the first four trading days after the scandal broke, and an estimated \$7.3 billion in damages.

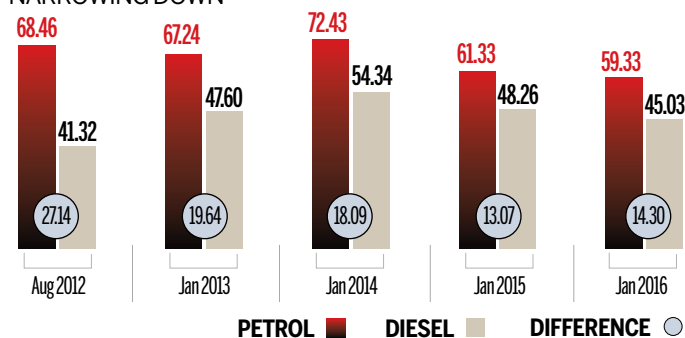
THE OTHER EVILS

While the biggest use of diesel is in transportation, diesel-type fuels (broadly termed distillate fuel oils or gas oils) are used in several applications, including residential and commercial heating, power generation, farming and industrial applications. In 2014, diesel gensets in factories and offices generated 90,000 MW



NO MORE COST-EFFECTIVE

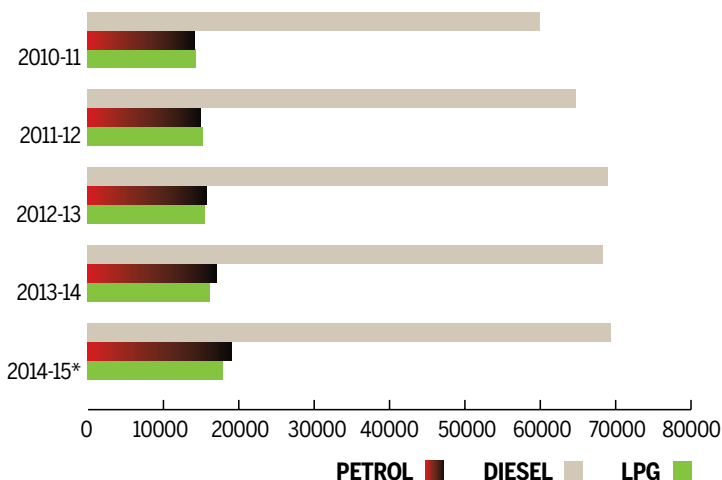
THE PRICE GAP BETWEEN DIESEL AND PETROL IS NARROWING DOWN



All prices in rupees and for Delhi; Source: Indian Oil Corporation prices in rupees and for Delhi; Source: Indian Oil Corporation

DEARNESS ALLOWANCE

PETROL AND LPG USE GREW IN DOUBLE DIGITS IN 2014-15, BUT AFTER DEREGULATION, DIESEL FLOW HAS COME DOWN



(Figures in '000' tonnes); *provisional
Source: Union ministry of petroleum & natural gas

of power, almost 36 per cent of the country's then total installed capacity. Diesel gensets sales are growing 10 per cent annually to an estimated 25 lakh at present, consuming around 1.6 crore kilo litres of diesel annually, and a sizeable chunk of demand comes from Delhi. The railways consumes less diesel compared to trucks and cars, 3.8 per cent of the total, but they are big pollutants as they do not adhere to emission control norms as yet. Less than 35 per cent of rail routes are electrified (until March 2013), so they remain big diesel consumers.

In India, the boom in diesel cars was fired by diesel subsidies that were originally targeted at helping farmers and the weaker sections but ended up in a proliferation of fuel guzzling SUVs, sedans and hatchbacks. Successive governments were wary of increasing diesel prices for its perceived adverse impact on inflation, broadening the price gap between the

fuel and petrol. This had led to a preference for diesel vehicles vis-à-vis petrol vehicles or, as experts would have it, a 'dieselisation' of private motor transport. Diesel was cheaper by Rs 32 a litre in Delhi compared to petrol by the end of May 2014, a gap that subsequently narrowed after diesel prices were deregulated or were allowed to be priced in tandem with international prices in October that year. This gradually reflected on sales too. Diesel passenger vehicles' share in total passenger vehicles sales dropped 10 per cent to 48 per cent in 2014-15 from a year earlier.

Despite the deregulation, diesel is still cheaper by Rs 14 than petrol, which costs Rs 60 a litre in the capital as well as in Mumbai, due to lower central and

state taxes on the former. Many companies launched new diesel models in India to cash in on the demand for diesel vehicles. Maruti Suzuki, India's largest car maker by far, has made new investments in diesel platforms in the last 4-5 years, while Japanese Honda Motors decided to launch its diesel cars for the first time in India.

THE WAY FORWARD

While moving to Bharat Stage VI norms would be key to reducing vehicular pollution, clean diesel to suit them isn't available yet. "Our state-run refineries are not yet equipped to produce ultra low sulphur diesel," says Bhargava. State-run oil retailers say they are preparing for the new norms. "The work to upgrade the

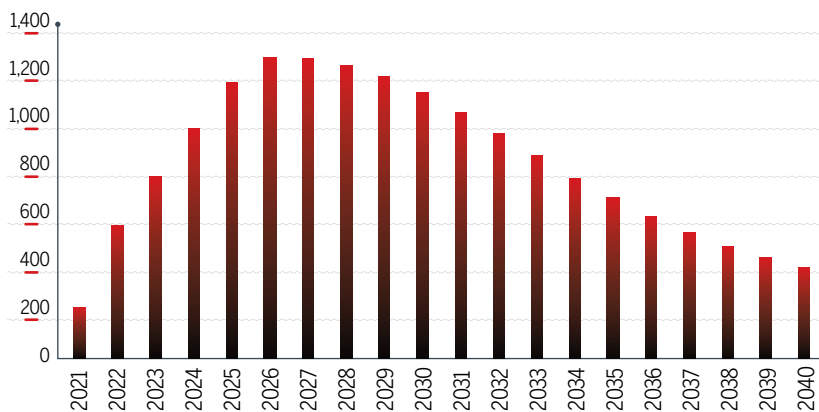
THE RAILWAYS CONSUMES LESS DIESEL BUT THEY ARE BIG POLLUTERS AS THEY DON'T ADHERE TO EMISSION NORMS. LESS THAN 35 PER CENT OF RAIL ROUTES ARE ELECTRIFIED.



RAJWANT RAWAT

NEW NORMS=BETTER HEALTH

PREMATURE DEATHS THAT CAN BE AVOIDED ANNUALLY IF INDIA TAKES THE GIANT LEAP, SHIFTS DIRECTLY TO EURO VI NORMS



Source: The International Council on Clean Transportation



TRUCKS ACCOUNT FOR UP TO 46 PER CENT OF VEHICULAR POLLUTION IN DELHI

MANDAR DEODHAR

fuel is progressing,” said Paul before the government announced the new norms early January 2016. The job is not easy, as it entails revamping of the existing facilities at a huge cost. “The government has given us the target and we will stick to that,” he says. Road transport minister Nitin Gadkari said that oil companies would need to invest nearly Rs 30,000 crore to produce Euro VI compliant fuel. The economic benefits of advancing to Euro VI standards directly far outweigh the costs though, and fully justify investments made in supplying ultra-low sulphur fuel, say some experts.

However, the auto industry is not as optimistic. “This is not technically feasible, as fuel needs to be available in time,” says Pawan Goenka, group president, auto and farm sector, M&M. “Also, experts with major parts makers have said that such a jump (into Euro VI) will compromise safety in vehicles.”

AUTOS GEAR UP

Carmakers are framing new plans to brace for the ban on diesel luxury cars in Delhi. M&M is planning to introduce more petrol variants in its SUV line-up, while Tata Motors has been making new launches in the petrol segment. Fleet owners are already looking for alternatives. Siddharth Pahwa, CEO of fleet taxi operator Meru Cabs, which has about 2,000 taxis plying in the Delhi-national capital region area, says it has fully converted all its taxis both in Delhi and Mumbai into CNG, which produces 20 per cent less harmful emissions compared to other fuels. It is now also in talks with Indraprastha Gas to convert its taxis in Bangalore into CNG.

It's becoming increasingly clear now that diesel's use as a preferred transportation fuel will depend on the swiftness with which the country can adapt to the latest clean energy norms. India can ill afford to drag its feet in providing cleaner, greener fuels if it hopes to strike a balance between economic development and a sustainable future.

Follow the writer on Twitter @MGArun1

CLEAN ALTERNATIVES

MANY COUNTRIES ARE NOW TRYING OUT LESS POLLUTING FUELS

COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS

It consists mostly of methane. CO2 emissions are very low. NO2 and particulate of PM emissions is also much lower. Used as liquefied natural gas in vehicles.

BIODIESEL

Produced using vegetable oils, animal fats, or recycled restaurant grease. Releases much less emissions, especially carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons. Widely used in the US and Brazil.

HYDROGEN

Mixed with natural gas, hydrogen helps create fuel for vehicles using a certain kind of internal combustion engines. Known for low emission levels. Iceland and Norway are trying it out.

ETHANOL

Ethanol fuel is created by fermenting alcohol and distilling crops high on starch like corn. Brazil, Malawi, Sweden pioneers in this segment; the US is a top producer.

THE NEW CASTET



INDERBOX

THE TRAGIC SUICIDE OF A RESEARCH SCHOLAR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD BLOWS THE LID OFF A SIMMERING CASTE FEUD ON INDIAN CAMPUSES



TAP TO WATCH VIDEO

By Amarnath K. Menon

When Rohith Vemula, a research scholar, snuffed out his life by strangulating himself, using the blue banner of the Ambedkar Students Association (ASA) as the noose, from a ceiling fan at the New Research Scholar's Hostel of the University of Hyderabad (UoH) on January 17, just 13 days before his 27th birthday, he spoke volumes through a five-page suicide note. It pointed, among other things, to the latent discrimination of Dalits on the campus. He had also not received his Junior Research Fellow (JRF) funds—Rs 1.75 lakh—for the past seven months which he wanted to be paid to his family. He has used it always partly to support his mother, a daily wage labourer, and a younger brother.

The suicide sparked off protests at UoH and elsewhere, including those at the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and the home of the HRD minister Smriti Irani in Delhi, as it came after a 15-day agitation by Rohith and four others, all Dalits, following their expulsion from the UoH hostel on December 21, 2015. The issue springs from an August 3 tussle between the ASA and the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), over a post about the hanging of Yakub Memon, the convict in the Mumbai blast case last July. The ASA was against it. An ABVP activist, N.

THAT THERE WAS PRESSURE FROM ELSEWHERE IS EVIDENT FROM THE U-TURN AFTER THE FIRST INQUIRY ABSOLVED ROHITH AND FOUR OTHERS.



Photo Illustration by SAURABH SINGH

Susheel Kumar, posted a comment on Facebook calling the ASA supporters goons and was allegedly roughed up. Following this, on August 17, Union Labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya wrote to Irani describing, among other things, ASA as 'anti-national'. On September 9, after an inquiry by the Proctorial Board, UoH suspended Rohith and others for a semester. Two days later, in-charge Vice-Chancellor R.P. Sharma limited their suspension only to hostels and put curbs on their involvement in public gatherings.

Significantly, this was barely ten days before P. Appa Rao was appointed as the new vice-chancellor. Meanwhile, Susheel Kumar's mother filed a petition in the High Court which sought report on the action taken against those involved in the tussle against him. Then, in a curious twist of events, just three days after the ASA had filed a petition in the High Court challenging Sharma's decision, on December 21, Appa Rao ordered that Rohith and others be prohibited from entering the administrative building, barred from mingling with fellow students on campus or participate in student elections. Additionally, they were expelled from their hostels.. Between September and November last year, the HRD Ministry wrote five letters to the university asking what action had been taken on Dattatreya's complaint. On January 4, the aggrieved intensified their protest by putting up tents in an open area on the campus and formed a joint action committee of students to force

UoH to rescind its decision. On finding no response, on January 17, the agitating students started an indefinite strike and occupied the administrative building even as Rohith went missing.

That evening, enraged by the shocking suicide, students vandalised the ambulance and did not allow the police to recover Rohith's body and demanded that the vice-chancellor, Dattatreya and Irani be booked under the law to check atrocities on Scheduled Castes and Tribes. "They were suspended on the recommendations of a sub-committee of the Executive Council and also on a Proctorial Committee Inquiry after an activist of the ABVP was attacked on the campus," says Appa Rao. HRD Minister Smriti Irani told the media on January 20 that the reminders were standard procedure for complaints made by parliamentarians but clearly, there is more to the case than what has unravelled so far. "What is stated in the labour minister's letter to the HRD Minister is not everything. There was pressure from elsewhere, which is evident from the U-turn taken from the first inquiry which absolved the students," says the chairperson of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes Panna Lal Punia. "Rohith's death highlights a larger issue of caste based discrimination prevailing on campus," says Zuhail KP, president of the UoH students union.

ROOT CAUSE

Academics attribute suicides by students to the apathy of administration as well as the lack of financial assistance and support system to help Dalit students. This has compelled several of them to quit education midway. "University managements are failing increasingly to respond to the aspirations of students from the marginalised communities and this is widely prevalent in our institutions of higher learning. UoH, since it's founding in 1974, has not had a single person from the marginalised community, steering either academic activity or administration," says a senior academic emphasising anonymity.

"Rohith's suicide debunks the



myth about the university's autonomy. It reveals how students survive creatively by living off each other. He is a remarkable man who dreams of writing like Carl Sagan and travelling to the stars. It is clear that the episode needs a story teller who captures the many faces of academic life today," says Shiv Viswanathan, social anthropologist and professor, O.P. Jindal School of Government and Public Policy.

Earlier suicides by Dalit scholars at UoH have failed to sound an alarm. In 2008, Senthil Kumar, a Dalit student from Salem, killed himself after the UoH did not provide the doctoral student with a supervisor. A committee that probed his death brought out serious discrimination against Dalit students. In 2013, M. Venkatesh committed suicide after his pleas for a guide went unheard by the university. A committee formed after his death found 'glaring instances of insensitivity and lack of diligence' towards



UNIVERSITIES ARE WHERE IDEAS ARE SPAWNED. THE BJP AND SANGH PARIVAR IS OUT TO CRUSH THOSE EVOLVING AS DALIT INTELLECTUALS."

KANCHILAIAH

Writer and activist for Dalit rights





RAHUL GANDHI MEETS WITH
RADHIKA VEMULA, ROHITH'S
MOURNING MOTHER

students from marginalised sections.

Academics say instances of subliminal ostracism of Dalits, at times in the garb of punitive measures, are not uncommon. “Similar patterns are found in Rohith’s suicide and the ban on the Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle (APSC). They start with make-believe stories and make the Scheduled Caste people culprits through inquiries not supported by facts. Why are Dalits being targeted repeatedly,” questions Punia. The ban imposed last year by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras authorities on APSC has not only put the spotlight on student activism but served as a shot in the arm for the Dalit movement on campuses across the country. While the ban—on the basis of an “anonymous” complaint to MHRD about the student group trying to “polarise” Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) students and being “critical” of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which the

ministry forwarded to IIT-Madras—was revoked in early June following a flurry of protests.

Following the revocation of the temporary ban, students at several other IITs and institutions of higher learning have floated APSC chapters or similar forums in solidarity.

While IIT-Bombay students have started a group called the Ambedkar-Periyar-Phule Circle (APPC), IIT-Delhi, Jadavpur University, Kolkata and Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi have launched APSC chapters. “Silencing of voices is a dangerous move and students have to and will come together against this,” says one of the Bombay IIT-ians involved in the setting up of the APPC.

Simultaneously, in Tamil Nadu, Kamaraj Aravindhan has launched an APSC chapter in Madurai, created a Facebook group and begun enlisting faculty and students from various colleges across the state into the

study circle. “Colleges will be asked to organise their own discussions and debates on social issues,” he says.

Invoking the legacy of B.R. Ambedkar and E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker *aka* Periyar, the APSC and ASA seeks to find ways to end “the pernicious practice of caste” and challenge the mainstream narrative of discourse and power. Issues at stake also include policies perceived as detrimental to Dalits, the poor implementation of the reservation system in institutions of higher learning, the near-absence of Dalit faculty and dominance of increasingly powerful intermediate castes in several states at the expense of the Dalit community.

CASTE-BASED DISCRIMINATION

The UoH and IIT-Madras incidents have also brought into the open subtle caste discrimination and elitism at top-notch institutions of higher learning. “Caste discrimination is a huge issue here. It is subtle and no one seems to admit that it exists. It only comes out when a student commits suicide. Like when Aniket Ambhore killed himself in September 2014 after he faced discrimination on the basis of his caste from peers as well as faculty members, and it was brushed aside as an accident,” alleges a PhD student at IIT-Bombay. “The modern face of caste is very different from out-and-out untouchability. It’s very insidious, and has transformed in many ways. What we need to do is try and get the discussion on casteism and classism out in the open. We need to sensitise not only the students but also the faculty,” she says.

What they are questioning is the mainstream narrative and rhetoric and rushed visits of politicians, like that of Rahul Gandhi to UoH, though his only visit to Hyderabad after Telangana’s formation in June 2014 was to pay homage to Congress veteran and Dalit leader G. Venkataswamy, for brownie points that continues to marginalise disadvantaged groups. Rahul made sure that party leaders did not make a beeline to UoH during

STRIFE AND SUICIDE

Caste tensions on campuses in recent years are the leading cause of a spate of suicides. A direct effect is Dalit student activism springboarding on latent discrimination while a blatant social boycott prevails in rural pockets.

February 2008 HYDERABAD

Senthil Kumar, PhD student at the university of Hyderabad commits suicide after the university suspended his fellowship.

November 2008 CHENNAI

Thevar-Maravar caste students of Dr. Ambedkar Law College Chennai attacked Dalit students.

January 2013 PATNA

Students of Patna University attacked students of Bhimrao Ambedkar Welfare hostel housing SC/ST students.

August 2013 COIMBATORE

Clash between caste groups on the campus of Government Law College after row over erecting flagpoles to hoist caste flags.

November 2013 HYDERABAD

Dalit PhD student M. Venkatesh commits suicide after alleged discrimination at the University of Hyderabad.

September 2014 MUMBAI

Dalit student Aniket Ambhore died under mysterious circumstances after a fall in IIT-Bombay.

his visit. The Dalit students point out that when politicians, including those in government, find it convenient, they appropriate some person or idea. This is how, these Dalit students argue, Bhagat Singh was portrayed as a Hindu nationalist though he was fighting for India's freedom.

This time too politics has tried to drown protests. The interventions of the MHRD in the university affairs and the alleged bias of the vice-chancellor has become a sideshow. Meanwhile, others followed Rahul Gandhi. BSP supremo Mayawati, TMC MP Derek O'Brien and a Lok Janashakti Party team dispatched by Union Minister Ram Vilas Paswan were among others who made their pilgrimage to the UoH campus.

In Kolkata, former TMC MP and singer Kabir Suman composed, sang and uploaded on social media a 63-second song for Rohith. For many others, outside the realm of education and institutions, the sense of alienation and discrimination runs deep. They face atrocities including rapes and death, and, at times, protest in retaliation even violently. In Bihar's Kaimur district, a school teacher discriminated against Dalit students by forcing them to stand in the last line during prayers after calling them by their caste names in Hindi, in the state.

In Rajasthan, barbers refuse to serve customers from the SCs and STs and students from these communities are not allowed to serve mid-day meals to those from other castes or drink water from the same pot.

THE RISE OF DALIT ACTIVISM

However, the emergence of such SC- and ST-based activism is a post-2000 phenomenon. This mobilisation follows the ones led by intermediate castes, even as greater numbers of youths from marginalised groups, having become more aware of the opportunities offered by education, feel the pinch of underemployment, joblessness and the lack of equal opportunities. "The new articulate

"IT SHOWS THE UNIVERSITY IS A RUSTICATOR OF DREAMS ESPECIALLY THOSE OF DALITS. THE SILENCE OF HIS TEACHERS WAS TELLING."

SHIV VISWANATHAN

Social anthropologist and academician



groups in our better academic institutions will continue to dissent as they evolve because they are relatively under-performers when compared with the brightest students in these hallowed institutions. This will continue possibly for another two decades by which time the newer generations from the disadvantaged groups also become more competitive. They should, at no stage, be muzzled but be allowed to air their views freely, more so on divisive issues, as this is the quintessence of higher learning," says Hyderabad-based social anthropologist P. Jayaprakash Rao.

Most political parties have well organised and entrenched student wings in the universities which the ASA, APSC and other pro-Dalit groups feel do not offer equal opportunities to raise their voice of protest and, therefore, the emergence of an alternative arrangement has become necessary. They believe college campuses, as for students of other political persuasions, serve as the springboard for the Dalit moment of equal opportunities that is still a work-in-progress. As Kancha Ilaiah, director, Centre for Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, says, "Where will the ideas come from if we impose such bans and restrictions? Universities are places where ideas are spawned, nurtured, brainstormed, developed and experienced." Very unlike the political storm currently being generated.

Follow the writer on Twitter @amarnathkmenon



Style is the answer to everything.

Fresh way to approach a dull or dangerous day.

To do a dull thing with style is preferable to doing a dangerous thing without style.

To do a dangerous thing with style, is what I call art.

Bullfighting can be an art.

Boxing can be an art.

Loving can be an art.

Opening a can of sardines can be an art.

Not many have style.

Not many can keep style.

I have seen dogs with more style than men.

Although not many dogs have style.

Cats have it with abundance.

When Hemingway put his brains to the wall with a shotgun, that was style.

For sometimes people give you style.

Joan of Arc had style.

John the Baptist.

Jesus.Socrates.Caesar.García Lorca.

I have met men in jail with style.

I have met more men in jail with style than men out of jail.

Style is a difference, a way of doing, a way of being done. ”

Charles Bukowski(1920-1994)

Let's celebrate Art with Style



THE NEW TURBANA

Across Punjab, the AAP and Kejriwal are what's making the news. Can the party ride the wave till 2017, or will a wily Badal and a rejuvenated Congress peg it back?

By Asit Jolly

M*ein Badalon se kehna chahata hoon, ke upar baithe tumhaare tauji mere ko nai dara paye, to in Badalon ki kya aukaat hai* (I want to tell the Badals that when their uncle (Narendra Modi) could not frighten me, why would I be scared of them?),” forsaking his signature muffler for a bright *basanti pagri* (yellow Sikh turban), Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was unforgiving and at his blistering best.

Evidently encouraged by the surging crowds, way more enthusiastic than those at parallel political rallies by Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and Congress at the Maghi Mela (fair) on January 14 in Muktsar, Aam Aadmi Party's national convener launched a no-holds-barred attack on Punjab's ruling dispensation—centered on the Badal Family but roping in every political rival from Prime Minister Modi to the newly re-instated Punjab Congress president Captain Amarinder Singh.



DELHI CHIEF MINISTER
ARVIND KEJRIWAL WITH AAP
LEADERS AT THE MAGHI MELA
IN MUKTSAR

GETTY IMAGES

OCCUPY PUNJAB PLAN

The AAP action plan calendar for the Punjab assembly polls

May–June 2015

Baiman Bhajao Punjab Bachao—a series of road-shows to establish presence

June 2015–ongoing

Punjab Jodo mobile app and real-time registration results in 24 lakh new members

September–October 2015

32 public rallies in tune with farmer protests, Sikh anger at desecration of Holy Scripture

December 6, 2015

AAP youth wing gheraos CM Badal's residence to demand action in pesticide scam

January 14, 2016

Kejriwal draws thousands at AAP rally at the Maghi Mela. SAD and Congress in a bind.

March–April 2016

Kejriwal to return for a **month of public addresses** in all 13 parliamentary constituencies

May–June 2016

AAP to name all **117 candidates** for 2017 assembly polls

June–July 2016

AAP to name the **CM candidate** for Punjab

eight frenetic months of activity.

The four Lok Sabha wins in May 2014 came purely on the buzz it had generated in being a part of Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement and in some measure its early success in winning 28 seats in the December 2013 Delhi polls. AAP leaders admit the party had virtually no organisational structure or boots on the ground in Punjab. "Our first challenge was to build an organisation at the grassroots," says Sanjay Singh, AAP's 43-year-old national spokesperson and observer for Punjab.

Deftly coordinated by Durgesh Pathak, a 27-year-old Allahabad boy who abandoned his IAS dreams to join the party in 2013 (and scored wins in every one of the 35 Delhi constituencies assigned to him last year), the AAP has in a short time managed to construct an organisation that would perhaps even impress its mainstream SAD and Congress rivals.

Quickly stepping past the crisis where it parted ways with senior founding members Yogendra Yadav and Prashant Bhushan along with two of its Punjab MP's—Dharminder Gandhi and H.S. Khalsa—and a sizeable section of volunteers nationally, AAP managed to, at least temporarily, quell nascent signs of further rebellion amid its Punjab unit by apportioning responsibility. Bhagwant Mann, the party's most recognisable face and Sangrur MP, was named head of the poll campaign committee, and Sucha Singh Chhotepur, formerly with the pro-Khalistan Akali Dal-Amritsar, was appointed state convenor.

Acting somewhat in the style of the RSS, the AAP set up 13 parliamentary zones, jointly headed by a prabhari or observer from Delhi and a local coordinator. Every zone was divided into nine assembly segment-wise sectors with further circles or clusters of 20 polling stations. And exactly like the BJP's saffron mothership, every booth already has an identified volunteer in-charge. "Nearly 10,000 Punjabis volunteered in AAP's campaign for Delhi and each one of them returned home with never-ending stories of the party and what we stand for," says Himmat Shergill, party spokesperson in Punjab.

And the crowd, going by the thunderous applause interrupting Kejriwal's harangue, was clearly loving it.

The Punjabi hinterland, well known for bucking political trends like in failing the 'Modi Magic' in the summer of 2014 and virtually every general election before that, is abuzz once again. A full year before they go out to vote in the state's 15th assembly polls in early 2017, Punjabis are seriously weighing the prospects of what Rampal, a dalit farmer of Sangrur's Balad Kalan

village, describes as the "*teeja panth* (third force)."

The AAP, which had surprised most pundits and perhaps even its own leaders by winning Patiala, Sangrur, Fatehgarh Sahib and Faridkot—four of Punjab's 13 Lok Sabha seats—is back and quite literally exploding onto the political arena. Kickstarting the state campaign almost immediately in the wake of its mammoth success in the Capital last year, the scenes witnessed in Muktsar were preceded by

TORS

THE BIG NUMBERS First-timer AAP took almost a quarter of the voteshare in the 2014 LS polls. Can it spring**AAP**Seats **4**
Vote **24.4%****AKALI DAL**Seats **4**
Vote **26.4%****CONGRESS**Seats **3**
Vote **33.2%**

Now consider this: Pathak claims a Punjab-based membership of “24 lakh” at last count, including some 14 lakh who physically signed up by filling out forms and another 10 lakh who took advantage of Punjab Jodo, a mobile phone-based application. All this piggybacking first on *Baiman Bhajao, Punjab Bachao* (drive out the dishonest, save Punjab), a series of intensive roadshows through May-June 2015, and later in September 32 public rallies reaching voters in each of Punjab’s 117 assembly constituencies.

Spilling over to October, AAP’s not-so-quiet campaign was impeccably timed. It not only managed to join ranks with the highly successful farmers and farm workers’ agitation demanding remunerative compensation for cotton crops lost due to the supply of spurious pesticides, but later also tied in rather neatly with the Sikh devotees protesting incidents of sacrilege involving the Guru Granth Sahib. Evidently sensing an opportunity, Kejriwal even made time to visit the families of two Sikh protesters who were gunned down by police outside Behbal Kalan village near Kotkapura.

Keeping up the momentum, on December 6, a large contingent of the AAP’s youth wing created quite a stir by courting arrest outside chief minister Parkash Singh Badal’s official residence to refocus public attention on what Shergill says is “India’s biggest pesticide scandal involving government ministers and state officials”.

Though there are no means to authenticate this, but AAP leaders claim their January 14 rally in Muktsar had participants from every one of Punjab’s 12,000-plus villages. Another claim, which is confirmed by anyone travelling in the state, is that there are posters of Kejriwal and other AAP

SHOW YOUR HANDS

Manpreet Badal, the self-proclaimed original aam aadmi, joins the Congress, says the party has accepted his ‘end VVIP culture’ agenda

The original aam aadmi,” is how Manpreet Singh Badal, Punjab Chief Minister and Shiromani Akali Dal patriarch Prakash Singh Badal’s long estranged nephew, likes to describe himself. Edged to the sidelines of Punjab’s political spectrum since the People’s Party of Punjab (PPP) failed to register a single victory in the February 2012 assembly polls, Manpreet had peripherally always hobnobbed with the Congress till he eventually decided to go the whole hog on January 15.

“I realised that the Congress has a more mature and experienced leadership,” he said after signing up. Manpreet, who polled approximately five per cent of Punjab’s voteshare in 2012, says he agreed to join the Congress on the promise that the party would wholeheartedly implement his 11-point agenda which includes ending the VVIP culture in Punjab.

Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi, he insists, is fully on board: “I met Rahul Gandhi thrice. He has accepted our agenda as his own and we merged,” Manpreet said after the tie-up was formally acknowledged by the AICC in Delhi a day after the Maghi Mela, where the AAP and Arvind Kejriwal held sway on January 14.

Sitting it out on the sidelines for over five years since he quit as Punjab’s finance minister (in

what is widely viewed as a family feud among local political circles), Manpreet says he has joined the Congress without any preconditions. “We have made it clear that we will not be working for any position in the party until I am able to win the trust of every Congress worker in the state. I first need to integrate myself into the party,” he says.

Significantly, though the man who had refused to stay on in the SAD and play second fiddle to deputy CM Sukhbir Badal, sees bigger things for himself in the

RAHUL GANDHI WITH MANPREET SINGH BADAL WHO MERGED HIS PARTY, PEOPLE’S PARTY OF PUNJAB, WITH CONGRESS.



PTI

it on the other parties again?

BJP

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GETTY IMAGES



SHOW OF STRENGTH AT AN AAP RALLY DIRECTED AT THE UPCOMING 2017 PUNJAB POLLS

future. “It is not about any political leader—Sukhbir Badal, Amarinder Singh or myself,” Manpreet told a reporter in Chandigarh clearly positioning himself in the lead in Punjab.

But even as his entry may buoy the Congress in Punjab, the Aam Aadmi Party is already dismissing Manpreet Badal as an insider who failed to expose the rot within the ruling coalition. “*Dikhawe mein aam aadmi nahi ho sakte hain aap* (You cannot be an aam aadmi for appearances),” says Durgesh Pathak, AAP’s chief strategist in Punjab, insisting that Manpreet needs to prove his credentials to Punjab’s voters. “*Hum Gandhiji ko kyun yaad karte hain* (Why do we remember Gandhiji)?” he asks. “Not because of what he said, but because he actually practiced all that he said.”

Manpreet says that despite overtures he elected to join the Congress because the AAP did not have a worthwhile blueprint for Punjab. And that is precisely where he could help—in helping state Congress chief Amarinder and the party forge a plan that raises questions, even contradicts AAP’s agenda for Punjab.

His appearance could clearly count as a big plus for the Congress in Punjab. But as a senior commentator says, he has arrived with “too little time to be properly toilet-trained in the Congress household culture”. Given his grounding as an Akali under his uncle Prakash Singh Badal, it could also be some time before Manpreet Badal actually makes the transition.

leaders—Mann, Chhotepur, Sadhu Singh, Shergill—staring back at you in every city, small town and village in the border state.

Back in Lehra Gagga (Sangrur), former Congress CM Rajinder Kaur Bhattal’s assembly constituency, for instance, AAP is currently the only topic of any real conversation. “I’ve never seen anything like this,” says Kawaljit Dhindsa, who runs a small private school that gives preference to children of distressed farmers who committed suicide. “The AAP is drawing the kind of people who want to do something for the party and not those looking for easy opportunities,” he says citing the case of numerous individuals and groups who have offered to organise public camps under the RTI and Right to Education Act.

Curiously, both the ruling SAD-BJP combine and the Congress, newly enthused after the reappointment of Amarinder as state chief, appear somewhat spooked by the huge response Kejriwal drew at the Maghi Mela. Both parties, clearly seeing AAP as the main challenge, devoted a large portion of their speeches to badmouthing the “topiwallahs”. Deputy CM Sukhbir Badal and his father taunted Kejriwal for not knowing the difference between the different crops grown in Punjab, asking the people to reject the “traitor” for “betraying Anna Hazare”. The Congress, surprisingly, did no different.

Predicting that SAD-BJP would crumble under the burden of 10 years of anti-incumbency, Amarinder Singh says, “2017 will essentially be straight contest between Congress and AAP.”

Although this is part of Congress’s strategy to slight the Badals, given the rapid emergence of AAP in Punjab, Amarinder’s words could well be prophetic.

So is Punjab already a cakewalk for the AAP? Despite the widely known Punjabi proclivity to try out new things, analysts say a whole lot could change over the coming 12 months. The AAP which has already shown its hand and, as Sanjay Singh says, must now “concentrate on building a lasting presence in popular consciousness and memory”.

But popular recall of the five years under Amarinder Singh is positive. He is seen as the one capable of challenging the Badal clan. He’s also the only Congress leader to stand up to the party high command as he did in abrogating inter-state water treaties in 2005. Observers say Manpreet Badal’s inclusion in the party could further ramp up the Congress’s prospects.

Finally, given the absolute surprise Sukhbir Badal pulled off in winning a consecutive second election in February 2012, there are many who still want to hedge. Sukhbir is a formidable adversary eminently capable of turning situations to his advantage.

Some months ago, a company that manufactures lamps was trying to market a new, high-tech product. Along the Grand Trunk Road through Haryana, salesmen sweated to convince Haryanvi dhaba owners to try the new lamp. But past the Shambhu Barrier in Punjab, at the first Punjabi-owned dhaba: “It’s new huh? Change all my lamps.” Will Punjabis live up to their story? The AAP certainly hopes so.

Follow the writer on Twitter @asitjolly

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI, FINANCE MINISTER ARUN JAITLEY AND COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER NIRMALA SITHARAMAN AT THE LAUNCH OF 'STARTUP INDIA' IN DELHI

 TAP TO WATCH VIDEO



#startupindia

NOT YET CLICK 'N START

PM Modi has the community enthused with 'Startup India', but the bumps ahead remain

By Shweta Punj

They say there's always a sobering moment after the initial euphoria. On January 16, some 1,500 New Age entrepreneurs turned up in New Delhi for the 'Startup India' meet, one of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's current pet projects. Inside Vigyan Bhawan, the excitement was palpable, the jam-packed audience hanging on to every word the prime minister uttered. "If the government doesn't do anything, so much will happen. We have done a lot for 70 years. Where have we reached? Please tell us what not to do. If we decide not to do anything, they (entrepreneurs) will take us places," the PM said, his less-regulation-is-good comments greeted by massive applause.

For the new growth kings of the Indian economy, it was the ultimate recognition. Aditi Balbir, co-founder of V Resorts, a chain of offbeat, boutique

resorts, was one of the two women in a team of 10 that went and met minister of state for finance, Jayant Sinha, in the run-up to the event and was also one of the first to reach Vigyan Bhawan. The story goes that Mr Amitabh Kant (secretary at the department of industrial policy and promotion) actually announced that the event was for entrepreneurs and that government officials should give up their seats. "People actually got up so that we could sit in the front. It was truly amazing. It's the first time we felt like the government was listening," she says.

Sairee Chahal, founder of Sheroes, a platform for women returning to the workforce, says, "It's the message that

counts...that we want to build an ecosystem for start-ups." Evidently, from a sentiment perspective, the government had scored an A-plus.

Almost no one can doubt the intentions of this government, but like for all things so far, there are obstacles aplenty fazing the nascent industry (this is when the administration is keen to 'unobstacle', a word devised by the Indian government itself). Angel investors and venture capitalists say they are happy the government has finally recognised the community but the fact that there's little to show on the ground is disappointing. And that started from the 'Start Up India' event itself.

“If the government doesn't do anything, so much will happen. We have done a lot for 70 years. Where have we reached? Please tell us what not to do. If we decide not to do anything, they (entrepreneurs) will take us places.” **PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI**

Originally slated for mid-December, it was pushed back by almost a month as there was little concrete progress to show. Over 3-4 months, there were many meetings between the start-up community and officials to flesh out issues like raising funds and expanding but it yielded little.

Of course, there have been positives such as the ease of registering and closing of a company, self-certification for labour and environment laws (a boon for firms like V Resorts that have to maintain compliance departments disproportionately larger than the size of their firms), no inspection for three years, funding for patents and incubation centres, changing of procurement norms removing turnover and track record conditions etc.

But most of these are a rehash of what has been announced earlier or, as a mentor explained, like “lip-stick on a pig.” The Rs 10,000 crore fund, for instance, was announced in the first Modi government budget (since then, only about Rs 2,000 crore has been utilised). It is also a fact that six of the eight ‘unicorns’ have now redomiciled outside India. The success stories of India have actually shifted either to Singapore or United States.

Some 75 per cent of India’s top start-ups left the country in 2015, primarily to avoid India’s cumbersome taxation policies and forex regulations. For instance, the Indian tax code does not have a definition for digital goods, so those selling digital goods or services—as the case may be—have to pay service tax and excise. “The appetite to change the framework is simply missing,” says a venture capitalist and mentor on condition of anonymity. The start-up plan has so far done little to tackle either the fundamental problems or stop the exodus.

The issue of allowing convertible notes—which allows a start-up to raise funds from an investor on the condition that the debt will be converted into equity at a later stage has remained unresolved (even as the RBI governor admits that some FEMA regulations are outdated). Unfortunately, this change would require about

THE BIG BOOST

GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES FOR START-UPS

Rs 10,000cr

fund for innovation-driven enterprise

Three-year

break from tax on profits

Rs 500 crore

per year credit guarantee mechanism

Exemption

from Capital Gains Tax

Self-Certification

fund for innovation-driven enterprise

Approvals within a day

through a mobile app in the making

Exemptions

to investments made by incubators above the fair market value

4% funding support by Centre for setting up incubators

90 days open window to close business in case of failure

WHAT'S MISSING

THE GOVERNMENT STILL NEEDS TO IRON OUT CERTAIN AREAS OF CONCERN

Rs 10,000 cr fund was first announced in 2014-15 budget. Only Rs 2,000 cr used, no addition.

A majority of start-ups take **over three years** to break even. So tax breaks of no use.

Incubators provide an ecosystem and not necessarily investments

Concerns regarding **raising funds** from abroad have not been addressed

15-16 changes in the FEMA (Foreign Exchange Management Act) law. The issue was brought before the relevant authorities in August last year. “Since the money coming in will mandatorily convert to equity, it’s clear that it will not go out of the country which was a concern earlier,” says Sharad Sharma, co-founder and CEO, Brand Sigma.

Moreover, for a start-up to avail the benefits announced in the plan, it will have to get an approval from a government inter-ministerial board which will decide if the company qualifies as one. There is a worry that this will add another layer of bureaucracy in a country like India which is yet to implement its second round of administrative reforms, unlike China which implements administrative reforms every two years. “The government should also not be meddling in valuations,” was the grouse of T.V. Mohandas Pai, former Infosys CFO and chairman, Aarin Capital Partners.

According to an analysis by iSPIRIT, a non-profit think-tank on start-ups, there are 34 issues that need to be resolved to arrest the exodus—eight of these have been addressed either through resolution or clarification. Of the 10 issues pending with the Reserve Bank of India related to foreign capital, only one has been resolved.

Clearly, a beginning has been made, policymakers are receptive to ideas and suggestions, and there is recognition of the fact that India needs to ride the entrepreneurial wave. As Pai puts it, “For the first time, they are beginning to trust Indians.” The various departments such as the DIPP, department of revenue, ministry of corporate affairs, the Reserve Bank of India have all been positive (the department of revenue agreeing to do away with capital gains tax on start-ups is even cited as a striking example of increased understanding). A measure of things getting serious is that the Securities and Exchange Board of India has now created a listing structure for start-ups. And most importantly, there is a prime minister who wants India to be the land of entrepreneurs. Of course, as always, the clincher lies in walking the talk.

Follow the writer on Twitter @shwetapunji

IT'S ALL GOODS

CM Vasundhara Raje enlists Kishore 'Big Bazaar' Biyani to turn drab ration shops into mini bazaars. The plan could be a game-changer, but it is also fraught with risks

By Rohit Parihar

Ever since Vasundhara Raje took over as chief minister in December 2013, a key priority has been to reform Rajasthan's highly mismanaged public distribution system. So far she's managed to trim the beneficiaries' list by over a crore, digitise it to weed out duplicates, and bring down kerosene pilferage. But her next move, turning the old kirana ration shop into upmarket fair-price shops—and enlisting a private player to help do the job—is her most daring one yet for it could make or break her second innings in the top job. The firm entrusted with making this turnaround is Kishore Biyani's Future Group of Big Bazaar fame.

Letting a private group ride on government licensed outlets which serves a section of the people with the lowest purchasing power could be a game-changer, but it is also fraught with grave risks. The first tender offering pockets of 500 fair price shops to multi-brand chains drew no response but the second one, offering 5,000 such shops, had the Future Group—which runs 10 Big Bazaars in Rajasthan—winning the tender as sole bidder.

According to the arrangement, the state's new 'Anapurna' stores will be supplied solely by the Future Group's unit, Aadhar Wholesale Trading and Distribution. The government's Food and Civil Supplies Corporation will make no investment but acts as facilitator to motivate fair price dealers to invest about Rs one lakh to buy a minimum of 225 items laid out in a shop with a set design.

The government ran half a dozen shops as part of a pilot project for a year before Raje launched the

first shop on October 31, 2015. The number has touched 200 now with March 31 being the deadline to open all 5,000.

It's a difficult task for Biyani, who has to set up at least half a dozen warehouses in the state to ensure that each fair price shop has its stock replenished once a week. Biyani will also have to hire vehicles and manpower to ensure supply at the shop, along with lifting unsold items. But it is a risk worth taking because fair price shops have enjoyed a monopoly in the state. The deal gives Biyani an unprecedented opportunity to be a private player stocking these shops without any competition—potentially leading to a huge spike in profits.

The Future group's 10 Big Bazaars in the state have a turnover of Rs 35 crore a year in the kirana section. If Raje's efforts to double the fair price retailer's Rs 7,000 a month income succeeds, the company's turnover from fair price shops alone would be Rs 600



“THE NEW STORES WILL NOT ONLY ENHANCE THE OWNER'S INCOME BUT ALSO PROVIDE QUALITY PRODUCTS.”

VASUNDHARA RAJE
Chief Minister, Rajasthan



CHANGE, PLEASE For many, the transfor

THEN ►

A fair price shop could open for only 15 days a month and sell limited quantities of subsidised items like wheat, sugar and kerosene, besides spices and tea supplied by the Food and Civil Supplies Corporation. The dealer's average income: Rs 8,000 per month.

crore at an estimated rate of Rs 12 lakh per shop. The state corporation says it expects only Rs 1 crore as its share of the profits which will be invested in strengthening the Annapurna brand.

Needless to say, this move is raising questions about why a government should facilitate a business house to become its sole approved supplier at fair price shops sanctioned by it. State Congress president Sachin Pilot even questions how the contract could be



mation of the fair price shops has been a welcome affair

NOW ▶

Some 5,000 shops will now be mini departmental stores with a minimum of 225 listed items (max listed items 350) on the shelves. Dealer earn an extra Rs 7,000, also offer customers better quality products.

OVERHAUL ▶

Raje has cropped the beneficiaries list for subsidised wheat by Rs 1.2 crore, saving Rs 896 crore for the state while making space to include 20 lakh deserving others who had been left out all these years. "We want every eligible family to get every paisa meant for them," says the CM.

given to a sole bidder. "There's no risk for Biyani... he's been given this facility of a government network of fair price outlets, on a platter," he points out. But Subodh Agarwal, principal secretary, food and civil supplies department, counters this saying, "It's the state's responsibility to ensure that fair price shops only sell products of certain quality, which could be done only through a common distributor."

Indeed, the task would be difficult

for any supplier given the long distances between fair price shops, low purchasing capacities, and varied consumer preferences. As of now, some of those who have opened Annapurna stores are happy about sales but others fear their investment may take long to recover. The disparity is obvious as retailers face a number of teething issues. Suresh Kumar Sharma, 55, whose Annapurna shop at Bhambhori village was inaugurated by Raje on

October 31, is upbeat. He stocks 350 items and has customers "even for Dove soaps". On the other hand, Gauri Kant, 40, at Phulera says he can't sell Annapurna products from the same place as he sells kerosene and wheat because of smell and dust issues. He's shifted the Annapurna outlet to the front yard of his house. But his shop is better than Ram Niwas Bairwa's setup at Mazoomabad which is just a tin-covered shed and, despite having some 1,500 captive clients, has had to bear losses since the initial price list shared with him was in English.

The same goes for buyers too. Rashmi Devi says it's convenient to buy a few branded items from her nearby Annapurna shop as her old retailer didn't stock them, whereas a real fair price consumer like Kamla Saini finds Annapurna too expensive for her budget.

Raje is hopeful that the government-facilitated distributor mechanism will be a success. The administration defends the hiring of a common distributor saying this will play a crucial role in providing subsidies, checking price rise, and even have a role in selling crucial items such as fortified flour. "From a shoddy place that rarely opens, we are working to remake these as mini-departmental stores that supplement the owner's income while also providing consumers quality products," Raje says.

The chief minister is betting big that Biyani can change consumer habits in a difficult segment since the latter is a seasoned player in the mass market space. Her more immediate worry should be the project tanking in times of rural distress. A failure won't cause any loss to the state but politically it will prove Sachin Pilot's reading that she was wrong to help a private company get into a market that could have taken care of itself.

The Future Group, for its part, says it plans to invest another Rs 50 crore to strengthen Annapurna stores, its eye on the big 25,000 stores prize whenever the next offer comes from to cover all fair price shops in the state.

Follow the writer on Twitter @RohitO



Photo Illustration by SAURABH SINGH

WHAT **DARK TRUTHS** LIE BEHIND THOSE DOORS?

Picture-perfect families don't always reflect the reality. The Fonseca family gruesome triple murders in Kolkata are a case in point.

What sort of people kill their children, or spouse? “Well, think of someone who’s at their breaking point,” offers Kolkata psychiatrist Dr Jai Ranjan Ram. Perhaps they feel like a loser or an outcast or they face constant criticism. They feel inadequate as a parent, or a spouse. And long to set themselves free of all that. “And, then, one day, there is a trigger. The final straw.” The silence in his chamber is broken only by the hum of the air-conditioner and passing cars. So what does he think of the Fonseca family triple murders? Dr Ram smiles. “Both Jessica and Neil were my patients. It will be unethical on my part to comment on them.”

That’s the talking point in a city that woke up on January 16 to the horrific triple murders in the Fonseca family. That’s also the latest angle the Kolkata police is probing. A family carnage that has gripped the nation, even as it tried to make sense of a raft of unresolved cases in recent times. The headlines have gone viral: ‘Mother killed twins in Kolkata triple murder,’ ‘Man says, was ‘forced to kill’ wife after she killed sons, attacked him,’ ‘Ideal family in dire straits,’ ‘Mental treatment before murder.’ The familiar horror is back: how did such a tragedy strike a seemingly picture-perfect family?

Those who know the FONSECAS talk about January 15, a Friday, a day of weekly Bar Nights at the 157-year-old Dalhousie Institute, a social club fondly called “DI”. One of the liveliest places in town for music, public quizzing and sports, it has always had Anglo-Indian patrons: from hockey legend Leslie Claudius to Calcutta’s first family of quizzing, the O’Briens, to tennis champ, Leander Paes. That evening, the club was particularly crowded. Up on the little podium, new talent Lorena Dhar was crooning retro pop. With a host of expats back in the city for the International Anglo-Indian Reunion, there was a sea of known faces—couples, families, friends—sharing tables, nursing drinks, shaking a leg, singing and laughing together.

Somewhere there, the fun-loving

Fonseca family was having a good time: Jessica, 43, and husband Neil, 49—who had celebrated their 22nd wedding anniversary just the day before—their 16-year-old twin sons, Darren and Joshua, and 21-year-old daughter Samantha, back home on vacation from her university in the US. The twins played football on the club grounds while the adults were at the bar with friends. As was her wont, Jessica chatted, laughed, karaoked, had a bit of a tiff with Neil and then danced in close embrace with him, as the evening wound down to a close at 11 o’clock. It was her last dance. Next morning, Jessica and her twin sons were found murdered in a bedroom,

EVENTUALLY, WHEN FORCED OUT OF HIS BEDROOM, NEIL HAD A DEEP GASH IN HIS THROAT. THE POLICE IS NOW BUILDING A CASE OF HOMICIDE AGAINST HIM. THEY BELIEVE HE KILLED HIS WIFE AND SONS IN COLD BLOOD, SMASHING THEIR SKULLS WITH A HEAVY DUMBBELL IN THEIR SLEEP.

while Neil was sent to hospital with a deep gash on his throat.

What happened that night? There are two versions. According to the deputy commissioner of police (South East) Gaurav Sharma and officers of the homicide section of the detective department, it was an inside job. Yet Samantha, Neil’s mother Shirley and Jessica’s sister Shabana Anwar, who were present in the house at the time of the murders, have all claimed that they did not hear anything. Neil, who is unable to speak and is being treated, has given his version in writing. According to it, the FONSECAS had returned home a little past midnight. With daughter Samantha, Shirley and Shabana at home, the boys slept in the

couple’s bedroom. At around 4 a.m., Jessica found Neil checking his phone. And confronted him with her suspicions of his infidelity, which turned vicious. He went off to the washroom and as he came out, he saw Jessica clubbing one of the twins with a heavy object. The other was already dead. He rushed towards her with a knife. She attacked him too with one. In the scuffle, Jessica fell and banged her head against the bedstead and died. Traumatized, Neil attempted suicide with a knife and blades. He admitted that he had killed her, but “in self-defence”.

There is of course another version, reconstructed by the police. According to it, Samantha and Shabana were chatting in the dining room till the wee hours of morning. Around 1 a.m., they saw Neil closing the bedroom door, where Jessica and the twins were sleeping. Around 4.30 a.m., the two were still there when Neil came out, saw them and asked them to go and sleep. Samantha retired to Shirley’s room and Shabana to another bedroom. At 6.30 a.m., the driver rang the bell, followed by one of Neil’s clients at 7.30 a.m. When Shabana knocked on the bedroom door, Neil came out “with a strange look in his eyes”. He told her that Jessica and the twins were dead. Shabana ran and alerted close relatives. Eventually, when forced out of his bedroom, Neil had a deep gash in his throat. The police is now building a case of homicide against him. They believe he killed his wife and sons in cold blood, smashing their skulls with a heavy dumbbell in their sleep. And the injuries on his wrists, which he claimed occurred during the scuffle with his wife, were probably self-inflicted, said a senior police official. Viscera samples have been sent for tests to ascertain whether the victims were drugged before being killed.

Even if the police can build a case, no one seems to have an answer to what was the motive. Neil ran his own interior decoration firm, Interiors Cal, on Hungerford Street. But for the last three years, his business had been in trouble. He had not been able to pay his apartment rent for the last many months. A regular at the races, he lost

5 SENSATIONAL FILICIDES IN RECENT TIMES



2015

Sheena Bora was allegedly killed by her mother Indrani Mukherjee. While the probe is far from complete, it is Indrani is still in judicial custody for her alleged role.



2014

Pushpa Kohli of Faridabad allegedly gave a contract to her brother to have the daughter **Kiran, 23**, killed for drinking, smoking and clubbing.



2014

Bhawna Yadav, 21, a student of Sri Venkateswara College in Delhi, was strangled allegedly by her parents for marrying outside caste and clan.



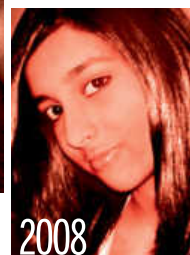
2012

Deepti Chhikara, 26, a Delhi school teacher, allegedly strangled by mother Birmati, with help from her brother and uncle, for separating from her husband.



2010

Nirupama Pathak murder. Mother Sudha Pathak was under scrutiny for the death of the 23-year-old journalist at her home in Jharkhand. The case is unresolved.



2008

Aarushi Talwar case, where dentist couple Rajesh and Nupur Talwar were convicted in 2013.

his racehorse Sartaj when the Royal Calcutta Turf Club auctioned it in September 2015, for “having failed to clear outstanding dues”. Yet, pleasant, soft-spoken, smart and gracious, he was everybody’s favourite club man, winning snooker titles for the DI and organising its projects sub-committee. Apparently, Neil has told the police that their marriage was under strain: first, over an affair he had some years ago and, second, over his diminishing savings, the constant need to cut back and the debts which were piling up. Was that why they were visiting Dr Ram for the past few years together? Neil was also visiting the doctor alone, even late last year. But according to his landlord, A. Seth’s family, “he was a genuinely nice guy”. Neighbours Mr and Mrs Gomes pay the same tribute to Neil: “Jessica did not interact much with us. But Neil was very friendly and polite.”

So how did a “genuinely nice” person suddenly kill three innocent people that he was closest to, unprovoked? What could be the motive?

“Family murders are very complex,” says Dr Manju Mehta, former head of psychology at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi. “They usually have links with mental illness and chronic depression, extreme personal problems, unexpressed rage and frustration.” Both Jessica and Neil were consulting Dr Ram. The state of their minds was clearly an issue in the relationship. And there was perhaps more. But they are not alone: data from the National Crime Records Bureau’s annual publication,

AWHOPPING SEVEN PER CENT OF **ALL MURDERS IN INDIA** TOOK PLACE WITHIN THE SANCTITY OF THE HOME. CLEARLY, ALL IS NOT WELL WITH THE GREAT INDIAN FAMILY.

Crime in India, 2015, shows that of the 37,313 murders and culpable homicides not amounting to murder, about 2,503 took place within the sanctity of the home—for love, lust, jealousy, guilt and revenge—seven per cent of all murders in India. Clearly, all is not well with the Great Indian Family.

Meanwhile, Palm Avenue, where it all happened, has moved on. Policemen patrol the road where resident VIP, the erstwhile chief minister of West Bengal, Buddhadev Bhattacharjee, resides. The local underworld finds some excuse or the other to celebrate life, with lights that blink and music that rocks the walls. Opposite Bhattacharjee’s residence, a yellow three-storied building, 73/1C Palm Avenue, looms—a dark, menacing silhouette in the moonlight. Cracks of light leak through some of its slatted windows. The top floor is pitch dark. This is where the Fonseca family had built its nest for nine long years. This is where it destroyed itself in just one night.

Follow the writer on Twitter @DattaDamayanti

Smart Money



SHUTTERSTOCK

WEALTH PLAN 2016

A GUIDE TO INTELLIGENT HANDLING OF SAVINGS, TAXES AND LIABILITIES. AND A FORECAST.

• TAXES • MUTUAL FUNDS • HOME LOANS • CREDIT CARDS



IMAGES BAZAAR

A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL YEAR

A tough ride ahead in 2016 but stay invested

The year 2015 has been quiet historical for the Indian mutual fund industry. The domestic mutual fund industry saw stellar inflows totaling almost Rs 75,000 crore, thereby effectively counterbalancing the sell-off from foreign institutional investors. The year once again belonged to small and midcap funds, clearly outperforming the large caps. So to which category will 2016 belong to?

MARKET ENVIRONMENT

- Year 2016 started on a weak note with benchmark indices down 4.7 per cent within the first five trading days, as fears of China hard-landing made a return.
- This was the second-worst opening to a calendar year since the 2009 financial crisis.
- Adding fuel to the fire is the 0.5 per cent yuan devaluation by China.

- Tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran has sent crude prices hurtling to a 12-year low.
- All these factors have resulted in people worrying if a 2008-type crash is in the offing.

UNCERTAINTIES

- Possibility of a currency war stoking fears of competitive devaluation by emerging markets.
- The upcoming Union budget and the economic

direction it renders.

- Passage of key bills such as goods and services tax and real estate bill
- Impact of implementation of 7th Pay Commission recommendations.

SMALL AND MID CAPS TO BE DETHRONED?

- The consensus among mutual fund experts is that the strong rally seen over the last two year is passé
- Markets experts contend that ensuing correction is

likely to dent a major blow to mid and small cap funds.

- However, distinct names will continue to perform if earnings justify the current valuation.
- From a valuation perspective, mid caps continue to quote at a premium compared to large caps which is against the historical trend of largecaps being at a premium.

LARGE CAPS TO MAKE A RETURN

- Given the attractive valuation, large caps is one space FIIs will be attracted to when the inflows begin.

MUTUAL FUND PREFERENCE

- Given the above factors, it would be best to opt for multi cap schemes or diversified mutual funds.
- Mid and small cap schemes should be last in one's order of preference.
- If earnings revival starts, then largecap scheme is the place to invest.

by Jinsy Mathew

EXPERT VIEW

“With the recent fall, the market is reasonably valued and with the corporate profitability bottoming out, Indian equity market should deliver double digit returns in 2016.”

Navneet Munot, chief investment officer, SBI Mutual Fund

“Diversified equity fund is the best pick for a retail investor.”

Waqar Naqvi, CEO, Taurus Mutual Fund

IN TAXING TIMES

A few tips on how to do your tax planning with market-linked products

It is that time of the year when people start talking about tax. The same when brokers/agents of financial products are seen readying for the peak season. Here's a few market-linked options that can help you with tax planning.

EQUITY-LINKED SAVING SCHEMES (ELSS)

- Also known as a tax saving mutual fund, ELSS enjoys the distinction of having the shortest lock-in period among the options available under Section 80C.
- It is a diversified equity scheme with a lock-in period of three years.
- One can invest through SIP with as little as Rs 500. There is no maximum limit of investment in ELSS.
- In case of redemption after lock-in period, capital gains are tax free.
- Given that it is an equity-linked fund, its returns are not guaranteed.

VIVAN MEHRA

- There is a plethora of ELS schemes available in the market. Therefore, investor prudence is of utmost importance while selecting a fund.

UNIT LINKED INSURANCE PLANS (ULIPS)

- It is a market-linked insurance scheme with a lock-in period of five years.
- It provides the twin benefits of insurance and investment.
- It offers tax benefits on the premiums paid by the policyholder.
- An investor can choose between debt and equity allocation.
- No tax is levied on switching funds from equity to debt or vice-versa.
- If the policy is surrendered within five years, the deductions claimed thus far will be added to your income and taxed accordingly.
- In case of redemption after lock-in period, capital gains are tax-free.

UNDERSTANDING SECTION 80C

- Section 80C deals with tax breaks
- An individual can claim deductions to a maximum total limit of Rs 1.5 lakh per annum
- A deduction is permissible on an investment done in a financial year
- ELSS, ULIPS, NPS and pension funds come under Section 80C of the Income Tax Act

EXPERT VIEW

For salaried class, in NPS, the employer's contribution of up to 10% of the basic salary plus DA is eligible for deduction under Section 80CCE over and above the Rs 1.5 lakh limit.

Gajendra Kothari,
CEO, Etica Wealth
Management

NATIONAL PENSION SCHEME (NPS)

- Salaried individuals can claim deduction of up to Rs 1.5 lakh from their own contribution under Section 80C.
- Post-Budget 2015, an extra Rs 50,000 can be saved under Section 80CCD (1B)
- The same is applicable to those who are self-employed as well
- Investors have the option to choose whether to invest the amount saved in equity, corporate bonds or government securities.
- However, there is a 50 per cent investment cap on equities.
- Even if the redemption is after lock-in period, capital gains are taxed as per one's tax slab.

PENSION FUNDS

- Pension plans offered by mutual fund companies invest 40 per cent of the sum into equities and the remaining in debt.
- Amount invested in pension fund qualifies for deduction under Section 80C, subject to a maximum limit of Rs 1.5 lakh per annum.
- One can opt for regular pension or systematically withdraw units, after vesting age.
- Since these schemes invest 60 per cent into debt, it is treated as a debt-oriented scheme. In case of redemption, you are liable to pay long-term capital gains tax.

by Jinsy Mathew

Follow the writer on Twitter

@jinsymathew



SCORE WELL TO GET A HOME LOAN

Different banks have different scoring models for approving loans. The key points banks consider before approving a home loan.



CREDIT HISTORY

- Banks prefer people with clean financial records. For example: If you default on credit card payments, it will look bad on your application.
- Banks check your financial status through your credit report, which is maintained by different bureaus.
- The approval of your home loan application depends on your credit score—800 is considered the best score by a bank. Anything between 700-800 is considered good. If your credit score is less than 300, the bank may deny you a loan.
- High credit score does not translate into low interest rates. It just helps you to get a loan faster.

OCCUPATION

- Occupation is an important factor while appraising a home loan. A company with a poor history of paying salaries can weaken your loan application.
- Similarly, if you switch jobs frequently, it gives a negative impression to the lender.
- A few banks, especially government banks, prefer to give loans to government or PSU employees over people working in private companies, businessman and self-employed people.

AGE

- People between 30 and 50 are most preferred by banks as they have a good number of working years left to repay their loans.
- People above 60 years of

age are scored low by most of the banks.

LOCATION OF THE PROPERTY

- Your property should have required clearances in terms of title, legal, environmental, among others.
- Remote location can make it difficult to get a loan.
- Distance of the property from the financing branch is also considered while sanctioning a loan.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- The longer your working life, the more points you earn. So 15 or more years of service will be preferred over someone with 10 years' experience.

REPAYMENT PERIOD

- The shorter the repayment period, the more preference you will get from the lender. The score lowers down to half for repayment period between 10 and 15 years compared to loan repaid within five to 10 years. And is the lowest for a payment period between 15 and 20 years.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BANK

- Banks value their old customers. They know your financial history, hence prefer you over new customers.

PURPOSE OF THE LOAN

- You earn more points if you are buying a ready-to-move-in property. Under-construction properties earn fewer credit points.

SURPLUS INCOME

- Low surplus conveys that you are financially stretched and chances of default are higher in your case.

by Teena Jain Kaushal
Follow the writer on Twitter
@teena_kaushal

EXPERT VIEW

“A person working in a company that has a poor history of paying salaries to its employees weakens the loan application.”

HDFC spokesperson

“We have internal scores to see if a person is eligible for a loan or not. However, the rate of interest is not decided by the credit rating.”

Ram S. Sangapure,
executive director,
Punjab National Bank

IN YOUR INTEREST

Carrying a balance on your credit card can prove costly. Pay your bill on time.



IMAGES BAZAAR

missed the credit card payment deadline by just five days. How could the company charge me so much interest?" We have all faced this problem some time or the other. What do we do when we get an unreasonably high bill? We frantically make calls and end up shouting at the customer care executive. But mostly, we do not understand where the problem lies. This is a mistake. We must know what the real issue is so that we don't end up committing the same mistake again. Here are a few myths surrounding credit cards:

INTEREST IS CALCULATED FROM THE DUE DATE

People ignore the payment date of their credit card bill thinking the interest charged won't be very high if they miss it by a day or two. You are wrong.

REALITY If you miss a

EXPERT VIEW

“The customer becomes liable to pay interest if the total amount due is not paid by the prescribed date. The interest is charged at an annualised interest rate on the daily outstanding balance on the card.”

Arjun Chowdhry, head, cards and unsecured lending, Citibank India

“If you miss the credit card payment, interest is not charged from due date. It is calculated from the date of purchase.”

Gaurav Wadhvani, co-founder, Credit Sudhaar

payment, the interest amount is calculated from the date of purchase.

YOU CAN SAVE ON INTEREST BY PAYING THE 'MINIMUM DUE AMOUNT'

By paying the minimum due amount, you just save on late fees.

REALITY Do not think 'minimum due amount' is a good reason for delaying your payments as the company still charges you

interest for the period. It, however, doesn't impact your credit score as you are not termed as a defaulter.

UNPAID BALANCE DOES NOT IMPACT FRESH PURCHASES

You missed the last payment on your credit card. You make a fresh purchase on your card thinking you won't miss the payment this time. When the bill comes, you are surprised to see that the interest

charged does not add up.

REALITY Trailing interest is something not many understand. But it could cost you dearly. This is because if you had not made full payment as per your previous balance on your card, the interest is calculated from the day one of your purchase. Grace period ceases to exist for fresh payments if the payment is not made on your card.

PART PAYMENT SAVES YOU INTEREST COST

If you think by making a partial payment you will save on interest, then you are wrong. Part-payment only helps in reducing the burden of paying the full amount next time.

REALITY Interest is calculated on the full amount even after making a partial payment. "If you spend Rs 1,000 and you pay a partial amount, interest would be charged on Rs 1,000 for that period," says Gaurav Wadhvani, co-founder, Credit Sudhaar.

IT IS NOT IMPORTANT TO KNOW YOUR CREDIT CYCLE

It is not that you get a interest-free period of just 20-30 days on your card. The interest-free period can be extended to up to 50-60 days if you wisely time your purchase.

REALITY Know the date when your credit card bill is generated. By making a purchase on that date, you can increase the interest-free period by almost two months.

by Teena Jain Kaushal

CHEQUES AND BALANCES

Timing and procedure are important while dealing with bounced cheques

In India, cheque bounce cases are the most common financial offences and carry a big penalty for the issuer. But with the government's new norms, there's a bit of relief for victims. Let's look at a few points on cheque-bouncing norms and things to follow that can help you.

NEW NORMS FOR BOUNCED CHEQUES

- The government has notified the Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Bill, 2015, which will allow cheque bounce cases at a place where the cheque was presented for clearance and not the place of issue.
- In the recently concluded winter session, Parliament passed the Negotiable Instrument (Amendment) Bill, 2015.
- According to the law, a case of bounced cheque can be filed only in a court in whose jurisdiction the bank branch of the payee lies.
- The new law may help in ensuring a fair trial.
- The legislation also mandates centralisation of cases against the same drawer.
- Once a cheque is dishonoured, the bank of the drawee gives the banker of the drawer a 'Cheque Return Memo' with reason for the non-payment.
- Within 30 days of the receipt of the memo, a legal notice is to be sent to the defaulter with all relevant details of the transaction.



RAJKUMAR

- After the receipt of notice, the drawer of the cheque is bound to make a payment within 30 days of receiving the notice.
- In the event of failure to do so, the drawee of the cheque can file a criminal complaint at a magistrate's court within a period of 30 days of the expiry of the notice period.

KEY POINTS TO KNOW ABOUT CHEQUES

- Dishonour of cheque is a criminal offence under the Indian Penal Code as well as the Indian Negotiable Instruments Act.
- Under Sec 417 and 420 of IPC 1960: the drawer of the cheque can be prosecuted and appropriate punishment may be handed out.
- To apply Sec 417 and 420 of the IPC, a case of cheating has to be proven.

EXPERT VIEW

“Unless complaints of dishonoured cheques are disposed of within six months, converting dishonoured cheques into criminal offences will lose its purpose.”

KTS Tulsi,
senior advocate,
MP (Rajya Sabha)

“Many think that if a cheque is dishonoured, you can straight away go to a court and get back the amount due. However, a procedure has been laid down, and that needs to be followed.”

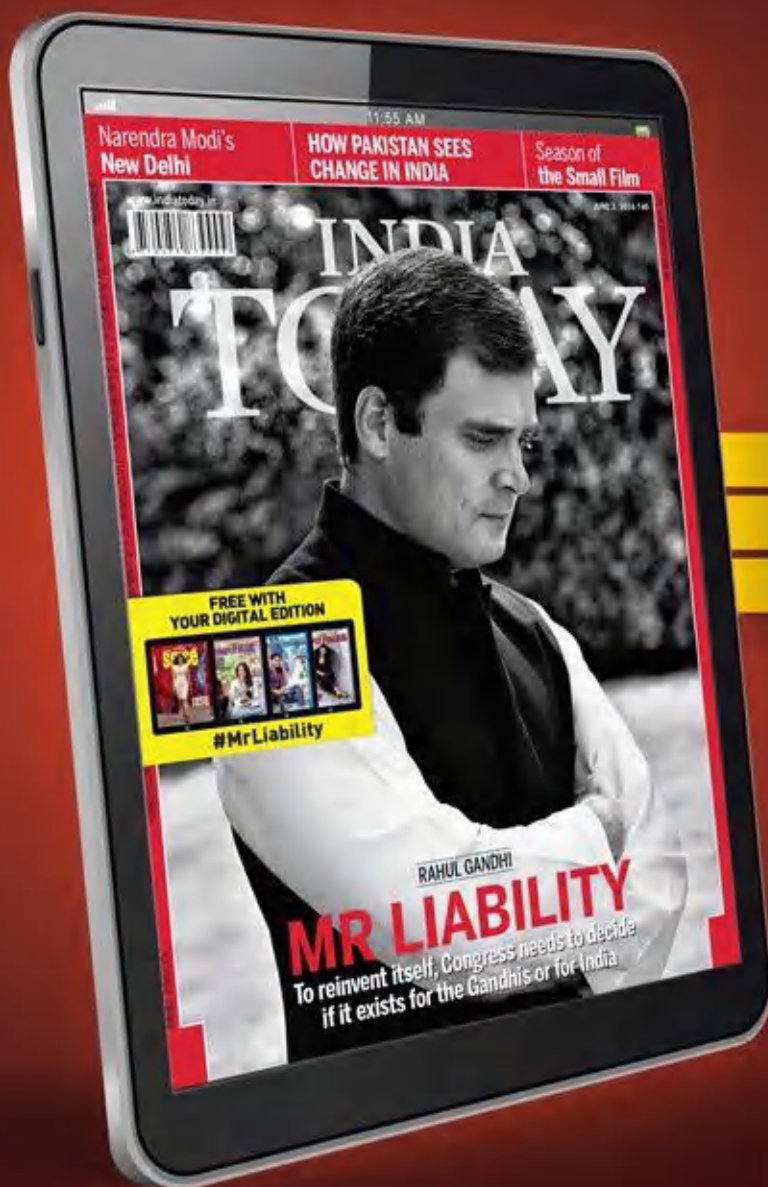
Adhil Shetty, CEO
and co-founder,
Bankbazaar.com

- A criminal liability can be established under Section 138 of Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 too.

- Under Sec 138, the drawer of a dishonoured cheque may be jailed for 2 years or fined double the amount of the cheque or both.
- There should always be a minimum balance in your account even after the cheque is encashed.
- One has to pay heavy penalty due to insufficient funds by the respective banks of the defaulter and the payee.
- Under RBI guidelines, a bank can stop issuing cheque book facility to a customer who repeats a bounce offence more than four times; valued at over Rs 1 crore.
- A bounced cheque affects your CIBIL score.

by Sarabjeet Kaur

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THE DRAGON RAISES A LAIR

India backs the China-led superbank as it seeks infrastructure funds with an eye on the future

By Ananth Krishnan in Beijing

If there were any doubts that the \$100 billion World Bank rival, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), was going to be China's show, those were quickly cleared up on January 16 at a grand ceremony to launch the bank's operations in the Diaoyutai state guesthouse, a sprawling property of gardens and frozen lakes in the heart of Beijing.

For close to an hour, representatives of the bank's 57 founding members, including finance ministers and top officials from Asia and Europe, waited in near silence for an audience with China's president Xi Jinping. A beaming Xi later congratulated them for making his vision a reality.

Xi had reason to be pleased. It was only in October 2013 that his government came up with an idea for an Asian counterweight to the US-dominated World Bank. Xi himself, his advisors say, couldn't have expected the rush to join the AIIB ahead of the March 2015 deadline for prospective founding members, when the UK, Germany, Australia and South Korea all signed on despite explicit requests from Washington to not do so—a rare diplomatic coup for Beijing.

For Xi, officials in Beijing say, the bank has two primary objectives: funding infrastructure projects in the region, including Xi's own pet 'Silk Road' plan, and delivering a not-so-soft rebuke to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) for dragging their feet on reforms aimed at giving a larger voice to China and other emerging countries. It is the second goal—with which India has

common cause—that finally prompted New Delhi to somewhat reluctantly join the bank.

INDIA'S CONCERNS

"We are now not entirely dependent on Bretton Woods institutions, that is a basic reason [for our joining]," India's representative on the AIIB's 12-member board of directors, additional secretary in the ministry of finance Dinesh Sharma, told INDIA TODAY. "We have been banging our head for reforms at the IMF and World Bank, but they are delaying. We wanted an infrastructure development fund, but the WB finally created a small fund for technical assistance.... If this wasn't the case, there would not have been a need for another institution."

New Delhi had concerns over the AIIB being just "a Chinese EXIM bank with a different name", but negotiations have now ensured checks and balances, say sources. Among the biggest concerns was also China's 'Silk Road' initiative—a network of infrastructure projects connecting China with Central Asia and the Indian Ocean Region—that will be, in part, financed by the bank. Among its routes is a corridor through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, which China is building despite Indian objections. India insisted on an article in the bank's charter that states that any project in a disputed area "should not be done without both countries agreeing", says Sharma.

Meanwhile, Beijing will contribute \$29.7 billion out of the bank's \$100-billion capital. India is the second largest contributor, with \$8.37 billion. China's voting stock is 26.06 per cent, a little less than its shareholding, with India



BANKING ON CHINA HOW THE

1 ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK (AIIB)

Members 57 countries

Capital \$100 billion

Agenda: Infrastructure projects in Asia

Biggest members (by capital)

 China 30.3%

 India 8.5%

 Russia 6.6%

 Germany 4.5%



CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING UNVEILS THE AIIB IN BEIJING

(7.51 per cent), Russia (5.93 per cent) and Germany (4.15 per cent) following. Sharma says it will not require much effort to gather a 25 per cent voteshare to prevent major decisions that require three-fourths majority, so China can't decide matters on its own.

INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

The AIIB's big plus over other multilateral banks will be its sole focus on funding infrastructure projects. India's own urgent needs here weighed heavily in Delhi's calculus. Out of the \$1.2 billion the bank will disburse in loans in 2016, around half should go to projects in India, officials in Delhi expect. Interest rates are expected to "be in single digits, compared with 14-15 per cent we get elsewhere".

Yet the decision to join will not be without its risks. New Delhi will have to play second-fiddle to an increasingly assertive China that isn't shy about pushing its causes in the region—causes that often rub up against India's. Officials say Delhi couldn't have afforded to stay out—and lost its ability to influence the institution's inner workings—when neighbours like Sri Lanka and Nepal were rooting for it.

"With China, a robust player in infrastructure, leading the AIIB, it will certainly lead to more easier financing for infrastructure projects," Ravi Karunanayake, Sri Lanka's minister of finance, said. Baikuntha Aryal, joint secretary in Nepal's ministry of finance feels "the bank will be a very great support in the rebuilding process after the quake".

Ultimately, India's influence in the bank will depend on support from other shareholders "in pushing rules and procedures for lending that are seen as objective and rational," says Arvind Virmani, a former chief economic advisor and India's representative at the IMF. "Just as the ADB is a Japanese-run bank with the US having a significant influence, the AIIB will be a Chinese-run one." How China chooses to exercise this power will ultimately determine whether India's decision to sign on was the right one.

Follow the writer on Twitter @ananthkrishnan

AFP

AIIB COMPARES WITH OTHER SUPERBANKS

2 ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB)

Members **67 countries**

Capital **\$165 billion**

Agenda **Social development projects including education, environment sustainability, poverty and infrastructure**

Biggest members (by capital)

Japan **15.7%**

US **15.6%**

China **6.5%**

India **6.4%**

3 WORLD BANK

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and International Development Association (IDA)

Members **188 countries**

Agenda: **Poverty reduction, development aid for poorest nations**

Biggest members (by votes)

IBRD

US **16%**

Japan **7%**

China **4%**

Germany **4%**

India **3%**

IDA

US **10.3%**

Japan **8%**

UK **6%**

India **2%**

China **2%**

THE SELF-DESTRUCTUC

Prolific artist Jitish Kallat is in an infinite loop with his shows, 'Sightings' and 'Covering Letter', and in his surrender to the letters of his words and the elements of his medium, is his evolution.

By Gayatri Jayaraman

There is an incredible continuum to Jitish Kallat's diverse repertoire that loops back every now and then like a planet in one of those constellations he likes to create—whether out of fruit, in 'Sightings' (2015), or in the orbs of singed paper in 'Wind Study (the hour of the day of the month of the season)' (2015)—hitting its orbit. In the cryptic half messages scribbled on 'Wind Study', he resurrects a two-decade-old habit of leaving notes to his work, and in the metaphysics of the dental-plaster menagerie in repose, it is he who is the 'Infinite Episode', the title he assigns to his current exhibit on display at Gallery Chemould Prescott Road.

Kallat is prolific and elemental. His 'Public Notice 2' (2007)—a work bought by UK billionaire Charles Saatchi in 2007 and bequeathed along with works such as those of British artist Tracy Emin's 'Bed', French-Algerian artist Kader Attia's 'Ghost' in the bequest of the Saatchi Gallery to the Museum of Contemporary Art, London—encompasses Mahatma Gandhi's entire speech on the eve of the Dandi March, and has just wrapped up in the Gallery of New South Wales, Australia.

His 'Covering Letter' (2012), using a missive from Gandhi to Hitler urging him to reconsider his violent ways (presciently written in 1939, five weeks before World War II broke out) is installed at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya in Mumbai this week. The letter exists only in scrolling photons projected onto a curtain of mist in a darkened room



JITISH KALLAT AGAINST
HIS PAINTING 'WINDSTUDY'
AT MUMBAI'S CHEMOULD
ART GALLERY

Photograph by MANDAR DEODHAR

TING ARTIST

towards which the viewer must walk and insert himself bodily into the work to pass through the other side. To cultural theorist Homi Bhabha, speaking at the vernissage, it evoked the gas chambers of the Holocaust. Installed in a public space in Mumbai, the work speaks powerfully of a dialogue between two historic extremes—of violence and peace. In as much as Kallat puts the public on notice, and in as much as Gandhi put Hitler and humanity on notice, the artist with his penchant for playing with the form of letters—burnt ones to cremate Nehru's words, bones to fossilise Swami Vivekananda's, and mist to vapourise Gandhi's—makes the viewer inserted into it question his personal equation with history. "Each of these public notices are sensorial provocations, not cerebral provocations," Kallat says. Where, after all does 'Public Notice 3' (2010)—which spells out Swami Vivekananda's speech delivered exactly 108 years prior to the 9/11 attacks in the LED lights of the Homeland Terror Alert coding system—exist, he asks. In light or projection or the form that receives it or impact? By challenging the form, he takes an oft-seen and little-spoken set of words—each of these texts are easily available to the public in books or at Mani Bhavan in original letter form—and he breaks it out of its clichés and makes it speak to its viewer all over again. There is not one way in which art can be seen, he says, insisting on deglamourising words from the monopolistic grasp of erudition.

"We assume that a historian walking through the letter would understand more of that artwork than somebody who doesn't know about the letter. We assume that all that citational information that this person carries is of greater relevance than a real, sensitive and physically present individual who can inhabit the shade and light of that moment... to just be in that remote knowledge of what Gandhi and Hitler signify for

themselves," Kallat says.

As viewers enter the dark, bathed in the letter of Gandhi's words towards the curtain of mist, they involuntarily bow. In all Kallat's works is a physical mise en scene of discomfort. In Public Notice 2 (2007), the text reads white on yellow, 4,600 bones in all. "The image retention is of bones and bones and bones and bones... collectively they have a condensed visceral experience. In 'Public Notice 3' (2010), viewers start moving to the edge of the railing, "because a word in red lumens leaves the after image of blue on the next word, and so there is this contradiction of colours regurgitating their own negatives in your own eye," he says.

He achieves this resurrection again in the almost-*dashavatar* of sleeping animals. In evolution's many

IN AS MUCH AS KALLAT
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modes tamed to equanimity, he evokes a return to innocence. What he calls a "surrender of scale which comes from a space of prolonged speculation on what did we surrender and regain in the process of wakefulness last night?" In sleep is the near death of many things, but also the rebirth of many things, he notes.

But it is in the six works of 'Wind Study' that Kallat pushes himself to elemental truths. Applying gum to the paper on which he draws graphite line drawings, he lays them outside his studio, under the tree, open to the sky and sets fire, line by line, orb by orb, to random lines of it. He watches as the barely perceptible movement of the wind in a three-second time frame

shifts the direction of the flame from north to west, leaving the paper singed with self-illuminated back-lit golden lines of light that Kallat refers to as "sunsets on a line that no watercolour could replicate". In the standing there, in all the humility of a not-easy straining-against all artistic training, to surrender to this conversation between wind and with the symbolic metaphysics of the fire, is Kallat's supreme destruction of the self. "I'm completely an eavesdropper, almost an interloper, basically just convening a process where the drawing itself is a transcript," he says.

The resulting image is what Bhabha refers to as a photography of sorts. Kallat agrees: "I have felt that these are pictures of things I cannot see." An image made by the elements of a day. The result is not just an image but an alteration to the state of control an artist possesses. "It tells you that there is a wider state of grace as an artist one can aspire to. These drawings carry extremely powerful and fundamental forces in small units. Any bigger a fire and I would not exist. Any bigger a wind and I would not exist. It's a very small unit in which this can occur. It's a humbling."

It is also a lesson of harmony embodied in the infinitely-looping bow of traffic signage on the roundabout in Stockereau, Austria in his 'Here After Here After Here' (2015). "What is a roundabout but a non-place?" he asks, explaining that all exits to 'place' begin from 'non place'. It is the harmony in the face of the sleeping alabaster elephant, tensile tough, visually fragile and contradicting its own materiality.

Like the mist of words that is infinitely scrolling, like the galaxies seemingly and visually forming around the 'beeja' or primordial seed of entire worlds upon the skin of common fruit at the Pali market, Bandra, evolution, he seems to say, is not in the mere revisiting of older selves and bodies. Historicity in itself is meaningless, but it is in destroying old ways of seeing, and resurrecting new forms, that we see them and ourselves, assigned to new meaning.

Follow the writer on Twitter @Gayatri_J

Making Art Accessible

An awards ceremony that bridges the art divide between the elite and the everyman

Ars Gratia Artis. Art is the reward of art, and often it is its only reward. Indian artists have struggled long and hard, ideologically as well as financially, to wrench free from the naturalism of a confining colonial yoke to achieve an independent voice. Be it through the nationalist movements of the Bengal School, the post-impressionism of Amrita Sher-Gil, the breakaway guild that were the Progressives, or the modernist-abstractionist engagements of the Baroda school. If J. Swaminathan was rejecting hybrid mannerisms, the Chalamandalam artists group was embracing rural iconography.

The 1970s threw up the socio-political works of Somnath Hore, Rameswar Broota and Tyeb Mehta, and the vibrancy of feminist artists such as Nalini Malani. Out of such stirrings, a vocal post-modernist nation birthed contemporary art with artists like Atul Dodiya and Subodh Gupta re-examining India in the eyes of the world. Today, our artists continue to respond to and provoke responses from the living, breathing movements of our time. The collective movement towards the *Swayambh*, the self-moving, self-shaping train of wax embodied in British-Indian artist Anish Kapoor's installation, becomes the history that shaped our consciousness of Indian art as much as of ourselves.

It is a history that the India Today Group has borne witness to over 40 years of reporting on the socio-political movements of our time. Through the decades, we have witnessed and championed the voice of art, artists, and artistic forces moving the country. Thus, the creation of the inaugural INDIA TODAY Art Awards 2016 is not a mere felicitous celebration of art, it is the conscious bridging of the social, political and cultural frameworks that move the country. "In our open nomination process, for the first time, we throw open entry to artists across the

country, irrespective of their existence within an institutional framework," says Aroon Purie, editor-in-chief and chairman of the India Today Group. "In democratising the process, we reach the small town, the big city, the illiterate, the erudite, because art is not the domain of a qualification."

Art has been an instrument of equality in a country that threw up a barefoot signboard painter M.F.

perspective. We hail not only those who create art, but also those who put art where it can reach the public at large.

The awards are being judged by an eminent 10-member jury committed to the preservation, expansion and propagation of art. From Lekha Poddar, as devoted to her private collection as to an outreach programme for children, to Kiran Nadar, the only Indian philanthropist whose private collection has been made public through her two museums with a third on its way, to Harshavardhan Neotia, whose family has dedicated itself to the preservation and restoration of art works and rare vintage books on Indian art.

We have Rekha Purie, who championed the India Today Group's first initiative into the world of art in 1995 with the launch of a premium gallery, Art Today, which invested its faith in Indian contemporary art at a nascent stage. We also have hotelier Aman Nath, a connoisseur of India's architectural heritage; healthcare entrepreneur Malvinder Singh, a collector who uses his workplaces to link art with wellbeing; Dara Mehta, the head of one of India's oldest investment firms and an instigator of conversations between Indian and global art communities; Amin Jaffer, international director of Asian Art at Christie's Auction House; and Rohit Chawla, visual director of the India Today Group and a photographer with an eye for pushing technological mediums.

The jury, convened by Aroon Purie, collectively believes in setting the vision and the tone for what the awards can set out to achieve. It believes that for art in India to truly grow and achieve the full potential of its force, it needs to be an inclusive, accessible medium of expression.

The INDIA TODAY Art Awards ceremony will take place on January 28, 2016, at The Leela Palace, New Delhi.

by Gayatri Jayaraman



WE REACH THE SMALL
TOWN, THE BIG CITY, THE
ILLITERATE, THE
ERUDITE, BECAUSE
ART IS NOT THE DOMAIN
OF A QUALIFICATION.

Husain, just as it did a royal Ravi Verma, and made both equally iconic figures in our cultural memory. Art frequently crossed the boundaries of religion or caste, from a Ghulam Mohammed Shaikh to a V.S. Gaitonde. Recognising these qualities, our inaugural art awards celebrate our commitment to the freedom of expression. We also celebrate the role of artists as the tellers of cultural fact, the photographers of our ages, the sculptors of

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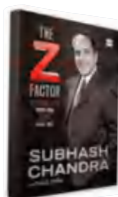


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FOR MANAGING TOMORROW

NETWORK CZAR

THE MOGUL WITH A MASS TOUCH, ZEE TV PROMOTER SUBHASH CHANDRA HASN'T MET A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY HE COULD RESIST

By Kaveree Bamzai



The Z Factor: My Journey as the Wrong Man at the Right Time
Subhash Chandra with Pranjal Sharma
HarperCollins
Pages 300
Price Rs 699

There isn't a business opportunity Subhash Chandra has known of that he doesn't want to excel in. A serial entrepreneur, he has, at various times, been a rice exporter, a packaging company owner, creator of entertainment hub Esselworld, owner of India's first privately owned entertainment channel, partner of Rupert Murdoch, then rival (we still meet, he says), friend of politicians across the spectrum, and failed promoter of the Indian Cricket League ("I haven't given up on it," he says. "Read the Justice Lodha report.").

Sitting arms crossed on a sofa in his office space in the middle of a prime piece of real estate in central Delhi, the 65-year-old exudes a calm that, he says, is hard won. "I was always curious about what is our destiny as human beings, what is our journey. Vipassana is a technique that is helping me move towards the truth. *Pehle toh haath bhi uth jata tha, thappad maar deta tha* (I would even raise my hand)."

Just as hard won are his maxims for how to succeed in business. People who succeed are not necessarily the smartest or the most intelligent. They are the ones who adapt to change, he says; they are leaders by virtue of being ordinary people with extraordinary de-

termination; and they don't fight failure, just move on to new things.

That's the philosophy that flows through his career, which has seen confrontations with prime ministers, power brokers and self-proclaimed godmen. His memoir, *The Z Factor*, is full of newsbreaks, as it should be given his obsession with the media.

His decisions have sometimes cost him friendships (when he chose to run a story from his friend Mukesh Patel, it cost him his relationship with the Ambanis), sometimes money, and in the case of the 2012 FIR against Zee News by Naveen Jindal, his reputation ("This was an unjust act by the UPA. In response, I supported Narendra Modi's campaign for prime ministership.") "My biggest mistake was letting people take me for granted, but if I had to do it again, I would," he says.

EXCERPTS

I MEET MRS GANDHI AND ALMOST PEE IN MY PANTS

I used to meet Dharendra Brahmachari twice or thrice a week just to keep the relationship going. He was usually surrounded by five to six young women. I was not surprised because he had a magnetic personality. Women found him very attractive. He would wear a *dhoti* all through the year, even in the cold winters.

While he helped me with the rice deal, it would also lead to his downfall. He fell in the esteem of the Gandhi family because of his role in the rice

trade with the USSR. Apart from me, barely two or three people knew the real reason for Brahmachari's fall from grace with the Gandhis.

It happened thus: The contract for 1983 was to be decided in December 1982. Now Brahmachari sent instructions that all the future export of rice would be done by his own newly formed company. He also told Dhar about this.

I was told that I would not get the contract any longer. This was despite the fact that he had taken an advance of Rs 2 crore from me towards profits for next year's contract. I asked that the advance be returned to me. He refused to give it back. He thought I had earned more than I deserved.

I had no choice but to keep quiet. But one day Vijay Dhar called me for a meeting, and asked, "What has happened between you and Brahmachariji?" I could figure out that he had heard about Swamiji's decision to start rice export himself.

Those days there were two groups close to the Gandhi family. There was a group known as the "Kashmiri group", which included M.L. Fotedar, Arun Nehru and Vijay Dhar. The other group included R.K. Dhawan, Dharendra Brahmachari and some others. Both groups were rivals and wanted to corner power and contracts. I told Dhar about Swamiji's decision to export rice through his own company. And also that he had decided not to return my advance for the year's export order. "How much money have you paid him so far," Dhar asked. I sin-



SUBHASH CHANDRA

cerely revealed the number to Dhar as he was the key link between Rajiv Gandhi and me.

Dhar asked me to wait in his office and went to Rajiv's room next door. Rajivji came back with him and began to ask me a lot of questions. I had to reply to all of them. Somewhere at the back of my mind I knew that I was getting into a bigger mess. It appeared to me that Swamiji had given them a wrong picture about our profit sharing deal.

But now I was worried, "I don't want to get into a fight, sir." I told Rajivji. "You are powerful people and in such a conflict between big personalities, a person of my stature will get crushed as if I never existed. If you can help me get my money back I would be grateful. But if you can't, that too is fine. I will assume that this was not in my destiny."

Rajivji took my plea seriously. He assured me about my future. "But you have to come and say everything to someone I have in mind," he said.

I guessed that it had to be Mrs Gandhi. Who else could it be? The prospect of facing Indira Gandhi terrified me even more. "Please don't involve me in this," I pleaded. I had never really met Indira Gandhi on a one-on-one basis. I had just seen her at their house when she was out of power. She wouldn't even recognise me, I thought.

A few days later I was asked to reach Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's residence at Safdarjung Road at 9 p.m. Before leaving home, I told my family that I might not return at all that night.

That's how terrified I was. I had no idea what would happen next. I asked Jawahar (Goel, his brother) to book me on a London flight the same night. I told him that I might have to leave India that night if there was trouble.

I was a 32-year-old trader from a small town. And I was at the centre of a fight between two powerful groups around the ruling family of the country. I said to myself, "these elephants are fighting and you will be crushed in their tussle".

On the appointed day, I reached the prime minister's residence by 9 p.m. and was asked to wait. Indira Gandhi was supposed to fly to Europe later

that evening. I waited for half an hour, then another hour passed. Two hours passed. The wait was even more terrifying. It was a December night and fairly cold. Finally, I was summoned inside the room around 11.15 p.m.

Sitting in the room were Indira Gandhi, Rajiv and Dhirendra Brahmachari. This was 1982. Rajiv was not in the government but was general secretary of the ruling Congress party.

There was silence for a few seconds. They looked at me very closely. I almost peed in my pants.

"How much money have you paid Swamiji in total?" asked Indira Gandhi. I told her the figure.

Swamiji's eyes were blazing. He was looking at me with deep hatred and anger.

I was asked two or three questions and then I was allowed to leave the room. As I was leaving, Rajivji asked me to wait in the other room.

He came out after an hour and said, "Congratulations, now go and relax." That's all.

I reached my Punjabi Bagh home by 1.30 a.m. and hit the bottle. I was too nervous to sleep.

From that day onwards, Swamiji's downfall began. The Gandhi family did not trust him completely after that.

We made huge profits of many crores on this trade, which I conducted from 1981 to 1984. This came to an end around 1984 when I was told that there was a lot of pressure from various quarters on Rajiv Gandhi to recommend some other person for such

contracts. Vijay Dhar called me and said that there was too much pressure to give this contract to a Delhi-based businessman close to the Congress party. I told Dhar, "*Bhai Sahib*, it is fine by me, I have made enough money." I thanked him profusely. I did not try to hold on to the contract or try to persuade Dhar otherwise. I must concede that the Gandhis were magnanimous and still recommended me for one half of the contract. The other half went to the businessman from Delhi. That was the last year I got the rice contract.

Families such as those of the Delhi businessman and Amitabh Bachchan were close to the Gandhis. I think they were good to me because of my small but insignificant help when they were out of power. The Gandhi family had an important trait. They never forgot people who helped them, especially when they were not in power. They remembered the small help I had extended during their difficult days. Rajiv knew about my assistance to Sanjay through Tripathi. I learnt to ensure that I kept my relationship with people irrespective of their position.

The contract stayed with us for four years and we made a lot of money. The first two years we shared the profits with Dhirendra Brahmachari and the next two years with Sitaram Kesri, who was a treasurer of the Congress party. The last couple of times I was asked to deliver the money at Arun Nehru's house. But I never met Arun Nehru; Vijay Dhar

remained my key contact.

Many years later, after Rajiv was assassinated, I was told that the Gandhi family believed that much of the profits from the rice trade were siphoned away by Arun Nehru.

I managed to keep the contract partly because nobody knew about Rajivji's support for me. For the first few years, even my brothers did not know that Rajiv was my supporter. In fact, I did not mention Rajiv's name to anyone till 1999-2000, many years after he had passed away.

During the period I was doing business with the USSR, I also became a messenger for requests for meetings between Rajiv Gandhi and the Soviets. I would call Vincent George or the other secretary, Madhavan, to organise the meeting. The code name we had for Rajiv with the Soviets was White Trousers. The Soviet trade representative would pass messages to meet him through me. They wanted to maintain a distance in public. Rajiv and the Soviets trusted me because I was discreet.

After that late-night meeting at Indira Gandhi's residence, I came a bit closer to the family. I could visit them if I wanted.

One day Dhar called me with another offer. He wanted to make me an agent for a bigger deal. I asked him what it was. He said it was to import arms for the defence services. I considered it for a while but declined. I couldn't sleep for three days after this offer. I did not want to be a *maut ka saudagar* (merchant of death). Eventually, Win Chadha was appointed an agent for the deal. The rest, of course, is known to everyone.

Dhirendra Brahmachari's situation worsened after Indira Gandhi's death. He had fallen on hard times in the last years of his life. I gave him Rs 50,000 a month as support from 1993 till his death in 1995. I had made crores of rupees with his support. It was the least I could do when he was down.

WHEN THE NARASIMHA RAO GOVERNMENT RAIDED ME

My profile and reputation in the government changed after the news bulletin started airing on Zee TV. I said to



P.V. NARASIMHA RAO

WITHIN A WEEK OF THE AIRING OF PRIME MINISTER NARASIMHA RAO'S SPOOF, WE WERE RAIDED BY ED OFFICIALS WHO ACCUSED US OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE VIOLATIONS.

myself, “Subhash, this box has given you a different profile. You should not think that you have created the Zee network. Rather you should think that the Zee network has created a new you.” It was important to remain grounded despite the fame.

We did manage some early innovation that media set the stage for channels that were launched later. We started a weekly programme called *Humarey PMji*. A camera van would go to different places to allow citizens to record their message for the prime minister in two minutes.

During the same period, general elections were announced. We mentioned the likely winners. But it was a mixed bag and the majority were not from the Congress. This ruffled feathers in the Prime Minister’s Office. Narasimha Rao would himself tell me, once the dust had settled, that Matang Singh, his minister in the PMO, had told him that Zee was running a campaign against the Congress party.

I was in London those days. I had to remain abroad for some more weeks that year to maintain my NRI status. These news reports created a lot of tension for my brothers and many senior Zee executives. Around the same time, our entertainment channel committed a blunder during the New Year’s eve special programming, by airing a spoof of Prime Minister Rao and his so-called guru Chandraswami.

I called Prime Minister Rao from London. “Sir, there is a big blunder that has occurred on Zee TV,” I said.

“What happened? I don’t know anything,” Rao said.

“Sir, there was a spoof on you that went on air. It was done by a young producer who we have removed. I don’t know what else to do now apart from sacking the producer,” I said.

“No no, Subhashji, it’s OK. You have explained the skit to me. And we should laugh it out. However, we Indians don’t know how to laugh at ourselves,” Rao said. This was not the end of the issue, though.

Within a week of the airing of the spoof, we were raided by Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials who accused us of foreign exchange violations.

In the ensuing elections, the

DHIRENDRA BRAHMACHARI WAS A REGULAR AT INDIRA GANDHI’S PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS



THE GANDHI FAMILY HAD AN IMPORTANT TRAIT. THEY NEVER FORGOT PEOPLE WHO HELPED THEM, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY WERE NOT IN POWER.

Congress lost. There were many reasons for the loss, including the demolition of the Babri Masjid. Our show had captured the election trends accurately. Rao met me after the elections and almost cried: “I wish I had paid attention to the reports.”

“If you had believed us, you may have returned as PM,” I told him. Rao agreed.

HOW I MANAGED TO CLIP MURDOCH’S DTH WINGS

“What do you have to do with DTH, that’s my domain,” Rupert Murdoch almost scolded me. I kept quiet. I did not agree with his view that DTH was his monopoly in the world. He might have control of it in the UK market, but he could not claim rights over India. His refusal did not deter me from my plan to get into the DTH business. I began looking for other options and possible new partners for starting DTH in India. I went to Malaysia in 1997 and met Ananda Krishnan, promoter of Astro Satellite. Krishnan’s parents were Tamils from Sri Lankan. As such,

he could also claim to be a person of Indian origin. He had launched a satellite and was in the process of launching DTH operations in East Asia. I asked him if we could partner him to launch DTH in India. He refused. “No, I can’t do it with you. I will want to do it with the Government of India or on my own. I have a lot of relationships in India and I can work alone.” He already had three or four transponders with an Indian footprint.

Krishnan then apparently used his influence with the then Indian prime minister, Narasimha Rao. He worked through the Malaysian government to meet Rao during the latter’s visit to Kuala Lumpur. Krishnan also got in touch with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) as it was a key body that controlled satellite policy in India. Krishnan managed to sign an MoU with the Government of India, through ISRO.

We decided to take on both Krishnan and Murdoch. My team and I began meeting policy-makers and ministry officials to educate them about DTH operations. I told them that

no country allowed foreign ownership beyond a minority stake in such ventures. The reason was that there was no filter between the DTH broadcasts and consumers. DTH could not be controlled by the government. This had scope for misuse.

By now I.K. Gujral had taken over as prime minister. All efforts were being made by the global players to convince the Gujral government about the need for DTH in India. Some domestic TV industry players and modern-day turncoats also began lobbying for foreign DTH players in India. These were similar to Indian rulers who had helped the British establish their rule in India. I believe that Gujral was persuaded by a prominent TV production house owner, who later became a broadcaster, to allow Murdoch to launch DTH operations. This producer was already selling content to Star channels.

While Gujral began to be convinced about foreign DTH, the information and broadcasting minister, Jaipal Reddy, was not so sure. He checked and found out that the Telegraph Act did not allow such services. The law was not clear on DTH services because it was a new technology.

He consulted the then Cabinet secretary, TSR Subramanian, and decided to issue a notification clarifying the issue and to remove any doubt about the status of DTH. The notification disallowed DTH services without proper permission or license. The issuance of license was not possible as the legislation on DTH was being considered by the government. Until the bill was prepared and enacted into law by Parliament, DTH would not be allowed into India. The foreign players went to Gujral and informed him about the impending notification. Gujral was livid with his Cabinet secretary. "Are you the prime minister or I am? What are you doing?" he shouted at the Cabinet secretary.

Subramanian replied politely, "Sir you are the prime minister, but there is a Cabinet resolution prohibiting DTH that is still valid. If you want to allow it, it can only be approved by the Cabinet. Hence we will have to call a Cabinet meeting and ask it to reverse the exist-

ing resolution by passing a new one."

This stumped Gujral. He did not have the courage now to reverse it.

RSS's RAJJU BHAIYA STYMIES FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN TV

News Corp and other foreign groups began lobbying for an increase in foreign holdings in media companies. In television, cable and programme production, 26 per cent to 49 per cent foreign holding was on the anvil. But the foreign companies wanted 74 per cent to 100 per cent.

We met all the stakeholders in India—the political class, the executive, the corporates and civil society. The idea was to make them aware of foreign ownership restrictions in other countries. We were giving special attention to the visual medium since it could reach even the illiterate population. The newspapers could be read only by a small percentage of the population that was literate.

By 1998-99, News Corp had violated the shareholders' agreement in

terms of Hindi programming and seemed to want to take Zee over. I had to counter it by reaching out to key institutions and people—leaders in corporate India, policy makers, media owners and influential people—and telling them what was happening.

I met RSS chief Rajju Bhैया in Nagpur. He did not understand much and asked me to meet the second-in-command, K.S. Sudharshan. In a meeting lasting four to five hours at RSS's Jhandewalan office in Delhi, I explained the issue to him. He took notes of everything. I think that they convinced the Vajpayee government to limit FDI in media.

SUSHMA SWARAJ MEETS MURDOCH

The Vajpayee government was in power while we were negotiating Star's exit. Somehow, the government came to know what was happening. In one section of the government, panic bells started to ring. Some people in the government and the BJP felt that if Star exited/merged with us, the Zee Group and I would become too powerful. Our detractors were prominent business group(s). They were trying to persuade the government to stop the deal between Zee and News Corp, and they succeeded in their aim.

I got a call from Murdoch, who said, "You don't seem to have good relations with the Indian government." He then told me that Sushma Swaraj had met him in New York and told him that the Indian government was not in favour of the Star-Zee deal. She had apparently promised support to News Corp for their businesses in India.

I was informed by a credible friend in the Vajpayee government that while the official reason for Swaraj going to New York was to attend the UN general assembly, meeting Murdoch was also an important objective of the trip.

No surprise then that Star TV decided to oblige the Vajpayee government and stayed on in India. I don't know why Swaraj was made to do this. Though I knew who was plotting against me, I could not understand why the Vajpayee government felt threatened by me. ■



ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE

SOME PEOPLE IN
THE VAJPAYEE
GOVERNMENT
THOUGHT IF
STAR EXITED
INDIA OR MERGED
WITH ZEE, I WOULD
BECOME TOO
POWERFUL.

THE WORLD WILL KILL YOU COLD

Sunil Yapa's debut novel is a dramatic retelling of the 1999 anti-WTO protests in Seattle



Your Heart Is A Muscle The Size Of A Fist
by Sunil Yapa
Little, Brown Book
Pages 320
Price Rs 599

By Sonia Chopra

It's one of those lesser-known events of American history that has faded from collective memory but one which briefly captured the imagination of the public, bringing into sharp focus what "protestors" could accomplish. That said, it vanished quickly from the headlines and became a news story, which was much mocked and little understood.

It happened in late 1999 when the mass protests of the World Trade Organization meetings on global trade became a contentious, bitter battle in Seattle, Washington, with lasting consequences. The city was

taken over by an estimated 60,000 anti-WTO demonstrators who protested and sought to raise awareness by voicing their concerns on labour, environmental, and secretive free trade agreements.

It was planned as a peaceful protest but escalated into violence. Protesters blocked delegates from 125 nations from entering meetings at the Washington State Convention Center.

This enraged law enforcement authorities who attacked protesters with tear gas and made hundreds of arrests, which resulted in several charges of police brutality and lawsuits. The fallout was disastrous: local businesses reported an estimated \$3 million in damages, city officials such as police chief Norm Stamper were forced to resign, and Mayor Paul Schell's future in politics seemed like it was prematurely over.

Those were five extraordinary, chaotic days with high drama and emotions ranging from anger to frustration tinged with hope for change. And, this is the story explored in the unusually startling, thrilling and ambitious literary debut by Sunil Yapa.

The 38-year-old author lived briefly in Seattle after the protests and was inundated with stories of that time. In his novel, *Your Heart is a Muscle the Size of a Fist*, Yapa reimagines and recreates the riots with a ferocious, visual intensity and turns them into an epic kaleidoscopic event. The title has been taken from a song by artist Dalia Sapon-Shevin, one that got much play during the demonstrations.

Yapa's novel takes us into the heart of the battle between the protesters and police. It is told by seven different participants who bring to the table their own prejudices, perspectives and wish lists.

Through the drugged consciousness of Victor, who is a homeless teenaged pothead and weed dealer, we see the group of dedicated protesters. On one side, there's Kingfisher, an eco-activist, and Henry, a strong supporter of non-violent civil disobedience. They form a human chain to block the delegates from entering the convention center.

On the other side are two upright police officers, Yu and Park, who try to wrest some control from the surging crowd and fail. Ultimately, they give in to their frustration and unite with the other cops who try to disperse the crowd with beatings, tear gas and rubber bullets.

The brutality is documented in excruciating detail. It's a bit gory, it's a bit disgusting, and it's worthy of condemnation. The violence by the angry protesters is somewhat difficult to stomach but the account is well told and you are led into going with the flow. One of the most heart-wrenchingly tender and dramatic moments in the book is the meeting between the police chief and his estranged son Victor in the street.

The genius factor of this debut isn't just in the capturing of the two perspectives between the police and protesters. It's the diverging points of view of the other narrators, each of whom has a back story, an opinion of the world and their own psychology that make this richly crafted novel with multicultural threads work amazingly well. There's the protestor who is consumed inwardly by the choices of her past, there's a lover who doesn't want to be a part of the violence, the two well-meaning officers who are struggling with the crowd, and the desperate delegate from Sri Lanka.

Yapa uses a lot of strong imagery which invokes the senses and stirs up a sense of nostalgia. His style of writing is polished and pared down. He uses politics, human nature and all its triumphs and failures to raise many important issues. One of the most powerful statements of the novel are also the chief's personal mantra: "Care too much and the world will kill you cold." A lesson that the protesters learnt the hard way. ■



THE SOCIAL NETWORK



Source: PayFort; Updated: January 2016

Graphic by AZAD MOHAN

internet star of the week

Words of Wisdom

Actor Kalki Koechlin has impressed the Web with her poem *The Printing Machine*. A video of her performing the poem which focuses on the media's lack of sensitivity and sensationalism when reporting on violence against women has had over a million views.



net tribute

Goodbye, Snape

Netizens were heartbroken to hear about the death of actor Alan Rickman, who portrayed Professor Snape in the *Harry Potter* movies. People mourned his death online, including Daniel Radcliffe. "As an actor he was one of the first on set to treat me like a peer rather than as a child," Radcliffe wrote in a post that was shared over 25,000 times.



twitter tattler



Trolled Point Someone

When author Chetan Bhagat tweeted that he was releasing a book on Diwali with a woman protagonist, the Web reacted with anything but encouragement. Most of them asked him to stop, stating that him writing from a female perspective might push others to pursue lofty aspirations—for example, Rahul Gandhi will be encouraged to go to a B-school.

web win

Keep Calm and Play On



asked the Australian to go bowl saying, "You're wasting your energy. There's no point. I've smashed you enough in my life." The video is being widely shared online.

Cricketopia.com tweeted Virat Kohli's response to all-rounder James Faulkner when he tried to sledge him. Instead of reacting with anger, Kohli

what's new App Alert

Aipoly identifies colours and objects by pointing your camera at it.



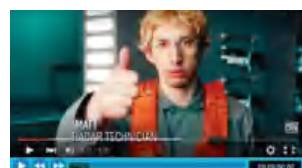
web WOW

It's a Dog's World Too

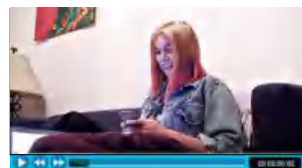
Over a million people have watched a video of dogs practising for the Republic Day march. For the first time in 26 years, 36 canines from the Railway Protection Force will be at Rajpath.



viral video



Over 4 million laughed at a parody of the TV show *Undercover Boss* starring *Star Wars* villain Kylo Ren going undercover to fraternise with his villainous army.



A woman reacting to her high school crush's new girlfriend made over two million laugh.



A Chinese man eating really large portions at a buffet wowed over a million.

Follow the writer on Twitter @lkummi

Tribe is a voice messaging app.





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Photograph by DEBORAH COLEMAN

THE OSCAR PRAYER



SANJAY PATEL'S ANIMATED SHORT IS A DAZZLING, MOVING TRIBUTE TO HIS FATHER AND HIS

By Suhani Singh

Chaitanya Tamhane's *Court* may not have made it to the Oscars but Indians still have something to root for on March 1. *Sanjay's Super Team*—the triumvirate of Vishnu, Durga and Hanuman—will be vying for the best animated short prize. Produced by Pixar and attached with its feature, *The Good Dinosaur*, the seven-minute, largely silent short, is a rarity in the rich oeuvre of the beloved animated studio. Made by an animator of Indian descent in Sanjay Patel, the film has a brown boy and his father as its two leads. It is a personal tale based on real-life characters so much so that it actually ends with photographs of Patel with his father, Gopalji M. Patel—first as a child and later as an adult. Unlike most Pixar shorts which emerge from ideas pitched by its employees to a

committee, the studio approached him to make one at a period when he was at the crossroads of his life, says Patel, 41, in an email interview. After two decades at the studio where he was part of acclaimed projects such as *Toy Story 2*, *Monsters, Inc.*, *The Incredibles* and *Ratatouille*, Patel was going to call it quits to focus more on his life as an illustrator of graphic novels based on Hindu mythology. Then Pixar approached him, not once but thrice, with none other than studio's chief creative officer and Oscar-winning filmmaker John Lasseter recommending his name.

It was an opportunity of a lifetime but Patel had his apprehensions given the subject was “so personal and so culturally specific”, he said. Indian characters are hard to come by in Hollywood films. For every Irrfan Khan in *Jurassic World*, there is also a Chiwetel Ejiofor as Venkat Kapoor

in *The Martian*. Animated avatars of Indians are even rarer with caricatures like Apu from *The Simpsons* being well known. But Hindu deities have barely reached the US audience with Nina Paley's feature *Sita Sings the Blues* (2008) being one of the few international projects to be based on the Ramayana. Was Pixar ready to make a film addressing a sensitive subject such as identifying with one's religion? Lasseter was convinced that Patel's short had to be about the relationship between Patel and his father and not just “a boy ignoring the stories from his roots”.

Born to Gujarati immigrants in the UK, Patel grew up in California where his parents ran the Lido Motel. As a child, Patel loved Looney Tunes and Japanese anime series, and was later inspired by the figurative art of the Renaissance in high school. A major part of his time was spent drawing



(CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT) SANJAY PATEL; STILLS FROM SANJAY'S SUPER TEAM



FAITH. IT ALSO HAPPENS TO BE A FAVOURITE FOR THE OSCAR.

at the reception counter of the motel. "Drawing has always been meditation for me," says Patel who drew inspiration from the work of Michelangelo. "It's the time I can really lose myself and just be." While the short shows Sanjay as a reluctant participant in his father's rituals and his own worship of comics and cartoons, in real life Sanjay, the child, wasn't regular with his prayers. "One day, my brother Amul stood up to my father and told him that we didn't want to pray with him anymore," says Patel. Thereafter, Gopalji also didn't impose himself, supporting Patel in his dream to go and study animation at the California Institute of the Arts, the prestigious art institute built by Walt Disney.

The little Sanjay in the short accepts the Hindu deities his father worships after a striking fantastical action sequence in which the idols come alive and have super powers.

"VEDIC
MYTHOLOGY
IS ASTONISHING.
IT STRIKES
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DIFFERENT LEVELS—
BE IT SPIRITUAL, OR
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STORYTELLING."

≡
"THE MORE I READ
OF VEDIC CULTURE,
THE MORE I SEEM
TO APPRECIATE MY
PARENTS AND THE
STORIES THAT
MATTER TO THEM."

Patel though would take two decades "to rediscover my father's faith and culture through reading and studying Indian art". He adds, "It wasn't until I was in my 30s that I first started learning about Indian mythology and discovered South Asian art, and fell in love with it. I am exceedingly curious about existential matters and how they take shape in stories with archetypal characters. Vedic mythology is astonishing. It strikes on so many different levels—be it spiritual, or just plain stimulating storytelling."

Most of this journey of identifying with his religion is evident in Patel's four pop-art illustrated books—the well-regarded *The Little Book* and *The Big Poster Book of Hindu Deities*, *Ganesha's Sweet Tooth* and *Ramayana: Divine Loophole*, published under his label Ghee Happy. Patel's cute sketches and effervescent illustrations have been displayed at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, Brooklyn Art Museum as well as the West Side Gallery at Pixar. "The more I read of Vedic/Indian culture, the more I seem to understand and appreciate my parents and the stories that matter to them," he says. "I find loving these stories is a way to love my parents."

Oscar or not, *Sanjay's Super Team* has already won him happiness in life. During the three years Patel spent developing and making the film with over 100 artists, he welcomed a son, who is without a surprise named after a Hindu mythological character, Arjun. And though the competition is tough with critically-acclaimed shorts such as *World of Tomorrow*, which has won over 40 awards including two at the prestigious Annecy International Animation Film Festival, Patel has already won the biggest award: make his father see his first film in three decades. "My hope is coming true," says Gopalji in a featurette released by Pixar. Tearing up after watching the film, he hugged Patel and added, "I am very glad that you achieved a lot. I am grateful you have given me a lot of joys which I can't describe." Now that's a real happy ending.

Follow the writer on Twitter @suhani84



1 SNUGGLE UP

Luna is a new “smart” mattress cover that connects with your home wireless network to track how you sleep. It makes sure you snuggle up at your optimal temperature and monitors whether you’re snoring, your heart rate, breathing and movement. As a bonus, it also controls your lights, locks and coffee pot.



2 SIP INTELLIGENT

If you don’t drink enough water, here’s a cup that will ask you to take a sip when you are running dry. Pryme Vessyl is a smart cup. Based on a clever algorithm of your age, weight, gender, sleep and activity level, a thin illuminated line rises, dips and turns blue when you need some water in your system. With the help of an accelerometer, it sends and analyses your water intake data to an app on your smartphone.

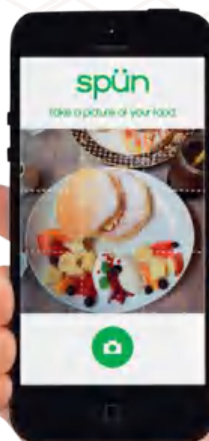
10 THINGS TO OWN IN 2016

SIT BACK, RELAX, BE A SMARTER YOU. LET THE WEB OF THINGS, OR INTERNET-CONNECTED APPLIANCES, DO ALL YOUR TALKING. SHHH...



3 SMART YOGA

SmartMat is a high-tech yoga mat that reads your body movements through an app installed on your smartphone or tablet. It can calibrate body shape, size, alignment, balance, suggest improvements, guides you on breathing techniques and even offer yoga classes. Expect delivery late this year.



4 EAT RIGHT

Spün will launch in June. If you are a dieter or a calorie-conscious eater, Spün will take a picture of the food on your plate and let you know how many calories are in each bite, how you break it down between carbohydrates, fats and protein, if you’re eating too fast or if you have room for dessert.



5 HOME ASSISTANT

Echo, a voice-activated home assistant, plays music and recognises audio commands. Connected to the Internet via Bluetooth or Wi-Fi, you need to say, "Alexa" to activate it. It answers questions, reads out audiobooks and the news while giving reports on traffic and the weather. The handy gadget can also place orders on an Amazon shopping list.



8 BREW A CUPPA

Consumer electronics manufacturer Belkin has launched Mr Coffee 10-cup Smart Optimal Brew Coffeemaker that runs on the WeMo home-automation platform. Bask in the thrill of brewing coffee through a smartphone and monitor its status as it brews.



6

ON YOUR WRIST

1. IF APPLE WATCH RULED THE SMARTWATCH MARKET IN 2015, LOOK OUT FOR APPLE WATCH 2 THIS YEAR. IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE MORE IPHONE-INDEPENDENT.
2. A FITBIT BLAZE IS A WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY WHICH LOOKS LIKE A SMART WATCH AND TRACKS YOUR FITNESS METRICS WITH A DIGITAL PERSONAL TRAINER ON SCREEN.
3. THE SPORTY LOT CAN LOOK FORWARD TO MICROSOFT BAND 2. THIS STYLISH DEVICE TRACKS HEART RATE, CALORIES BURNT, AND SLEEP.

9 HERE'S TO JEEVES

Here's a robot from an Indian company, the Gurgaon-based Milagrow Humantech, that can become your house-help. AguaBot 4.0 is the world's first wet-floor cleaning robot, loaded with Robotic 6th Sense, powerful suction, UV radiation cleaning, automatic obstacle and fall detection, high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, and all-surface cleaning. The robot can clean up to 3,000 sq ft space on a single charge and you can control the robot remotely.



10 KITCHEN GARDEN

Veritable is an indoor garden that grows kitchen produce through the year—without you lifting a finger. It provides nutrients, has a built-in reservoir of water and LED lights that follow a day-and-night cycle. There's a free smartphone app with tips on when to plant and how. Coming in April.

7 SMART FRIDGE

Samsung is launching a futuristic fridge with four doors, a 21.5-inch full HD LCD resolution screen, Android touchscreen and three cameras that capture an image every time the door closes. You can access those images anytime using your smartphone, remotely peek inside your fridge, track expiration dates, check if you have an item of grocery you need and update your shopping list from the store.



EYECATCHERS

HOME GIRL

Even as **Priyanka Chopra** looks to continue her run in Hollywood when she starts shooting for *Baywatch*, the film, she is keen on sticking to her *desigal* tag. The actress-singer has turned producer and promoter of regional cinema. She will release three films in three languages—Bhojpuri, Punjabi and Marathi—all of them this year.



BROKEN TIES

All is not well between **Kabir Bedi** and his daughter **Pooja**, after the latter took to Facebook to express her disapproval of his fourth wife. Pooja equated Parveen Dusanji, who is also younger than her, to a “wicked witch or an evil step-mother”. Daddy turned to Twitter to show he was not cool with Pooja’s “venomous comments”. May be they can patch up on Instagram?



BACK TO BASICS

Pankaj Kapur hasn’t had the best run in front of the camera with both *Matru Ki Bijlee Ka Mandola* and *Shaandaar* failing at the box office. Returning to his roots, the NSD graduate has started a company, Theatron. “We are looking forward to coming back home with a warm story that is close to our heart,” says Kapur. It launches with Kapur reading his novella, *Dopehri*.

■ Compiled by
Suhani Singh Follow the
writer on Twitter @suhani84

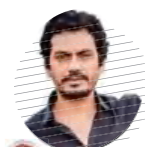
HOW WAS THE WEEK?



Good

Anuradha Roy

The author’s *Sleeping on Jupiter* won the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature.



Bad

Nawazuddin Siddiqui

The actor is accused of assaulting a woman in a dispute over parking space.

INSPIRATION OF THE WEEK

THINKING OUT LOUD

Choreographer **Bosco Martis**, better known for his hip-hop moves, decided to take the contemporary route in ‘Pashmina’ from *Fitoor*. While the result looks pretty, similarities to the video of British singer’s Grammy-nominated track are just too hard to dismiss.



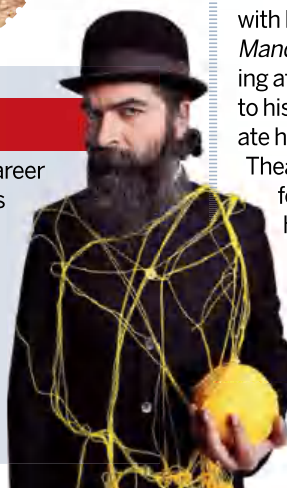
‘Thinking Out Loud’ by
Ed Sheeran



‘Pashmina’
from *Fitoor*

RUNWAY SUCCESS

Delhi-based designer **Suket Dhir**’s fashion career took a giant leap after he won the prestigious International Woolmark Prize, becoming the second Indian and the first to do so in menswear. Dhir wowed the judges with his collection of loose pants and jackets which stood out for its “romantic” designs and emphasis on details. Prize includes space to showcase his ikat creations in stores such as Saks Fifth Avenue in the Big Apple.



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WHAT'S COOKING?

Top trends and designs to
help create the perfect space

NEW DESIGN RULES, LAUNCHES, INNOVATIVE GADGETS

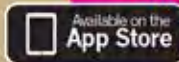
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KITCHEN SPECIAL

9 COOK IN COMFORT

Get inspired by kitchen designs from across the country, as architects share their favourites

22 BACHELOR KITCHENS

Advice, ideas, tips and tricks on how to create a cooking environment that reflects the single lifestyle

ARCHITECTURE

30 TIME FOR A REVAMP

An old Bungalow in the Capital gets a new lease of life by Delhi-based Studio An-V-Thot Architects

DECOR

26 NEW DESIGN RULES


Co-founder of Jaypore.com, Shilpa Sharma decodes interior trends for the coming year

PLUS

2 LAUNCHES

34 WORLD WATCH

36 LAST LOOK



HOME | LAUNCHES

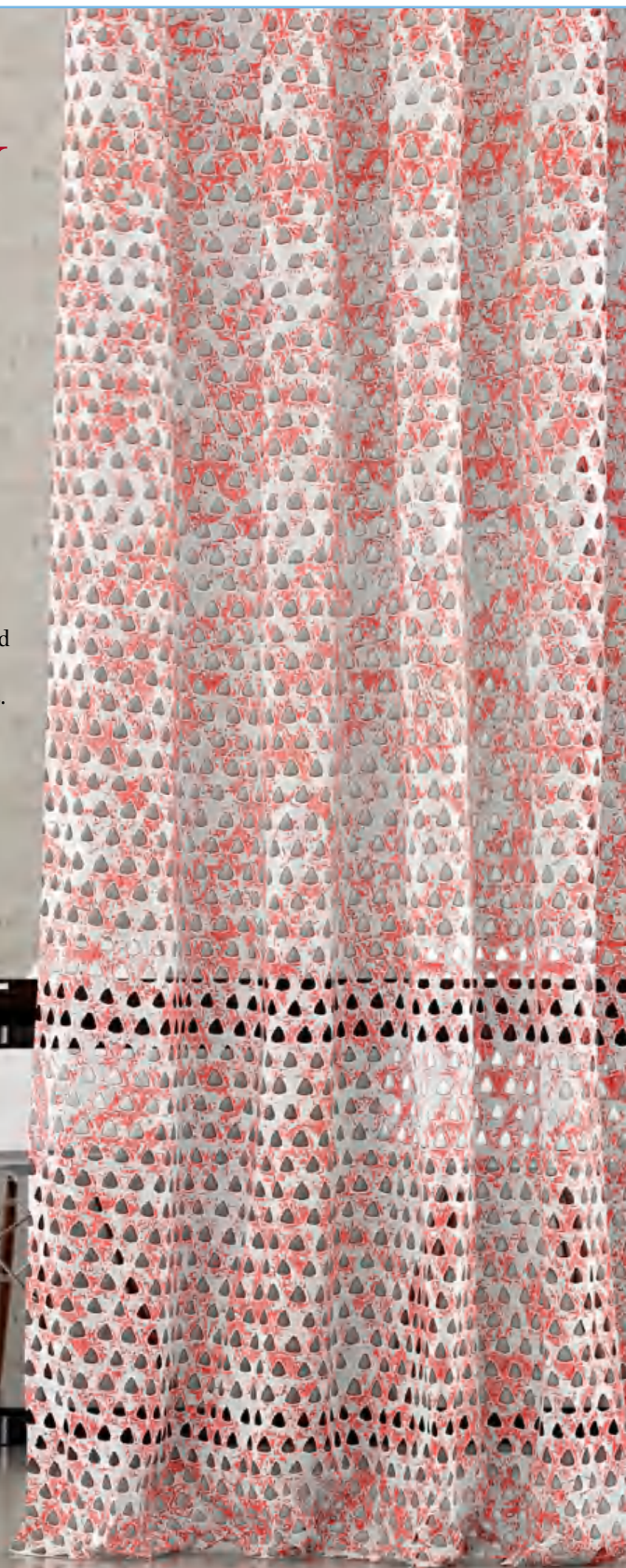
I Spy

Your guide to the hottest new stores and products

Fine Fabrics

Zynna has introduced 'Dance' collection from Italy. On display are a versatile range of textile compositions in cotton, linen, viscose, polyester and silk in varied tones of orange, pink, off white, plum and dove grey. The fabrics used in this collection are ideal for light upholstery and window treatments.

PRICE on request; **AT** S-56/20, DLF Phase-III, Gurgaon





Storage made Easy ▲

Wire baskets or racks are a key components of modular kitchens as they facilitate easy storage. Hettich has launched a new range of CargoTech wire baskets using a dense mesh of wires that provides a sturdy structure that you can place kitchenware on. The Pull Out Shelf Cargo Series has a loading capacity of 30 to 40 kg, can be mounted easily and comes with a chrome plate finish. The best part? The product also has a 10 year warranty against rusting. **PRICE** ₹1,900 to ₹5,800 depending on width and depth; **AT** www.hettich.com/in



Get Outdoorsy ▼

Soak up the winter sun with this delightfully distressed, scratch-proof, and outdoor ready breakfast bench for two by Ficus Fine Living, the furniture brand, in association with The Great Eastern Home. **PRICE** ₹1,62,000

AT The New Great Eastern Mills, 25- 29 Dr Ambedkar Road, Byculla, Mumbai



▲ New Benchmark

Take seat on this handmade and hand finished ornate ottoman with tufted leather seating by bespoke furniture makers, Anteak. This timeless piece will spruce up any classical setting. Every detail on this piece exudes elegance and sophistication. Interestingly, the brand's wares are inspired by renowned historical styles adapted and refined to meet the needs of today's customers. So, whether you place it in the living room or by the dining table, this bench is sure to grab eyeballs.

PRICE on request; **AT** www.anteak.in



Dress the Table ▲

Designer Kiran Uttam Ghosh has forayed into home furnishing with The Well Dressed Table collection. It consists of a motley crew of table mats, runners, bejewelled napkins with zardozi napkin rings. Fine handwoven silk muslin, organzas, dhakai silk, organic indigo-dyed cotton and velvet textures set an indulgent mood for the luxe collection of table linen. **PRICE** on request; **AT** 47/1 F, Hazra Road, Kolkata

Top Drawer ▼

A kitchen is full of utensils, cookware, dishes, cutlery and spices, many of which are used sparingly. We tend to use the same utensils and ingredients day after day. Wouldn't it be practical then if we could store everything in the same cupboard? Ebco's new Kitchen Tower is the perfect solution. The cooking tools that you use every day should always be within easy reach. Kitchen Tower provides a clearer overview and uses space more efficiently than conventional drawers. With this you can make the best use of the space under your electrical appliances or beside your waste disposal system. It is the only solution that allows you to stock and store all you need under one roof and comes with inserts specially designed to place knives, spoons, spices, and all the other ingredients you need to cook with. **PRICE** on request; **AT** www.ebco.in



◀ Bright Ideas

For an exquisite gifting option this season consider Twinkle Khanna's limited edition candle collection called Le Cirque, from her interior brand, The White Window. The collection is inspired by vintage circus posters and features premium hand-crafted candles in four scents, namely Cuba, Berlin, Moscow and Antibes, crafted in vivacious colours like gold, shades of blue and purple. **PRICE** on request; **AT** Ambedkar Road, Bandra West, Mumbai

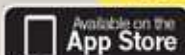
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Where Fashion Gets Personal

CUT FROM THE SAME CLOTH

Matthieu Frey expands his grandfather Pierre Frey's textile repertoire by bringing the eponymous French luxury brand into the Indian market

By RIDHI KALE



In 1935 Pierre Frey set up a maison de luxe (luxury design house) in France, designing and manufacturing fabrics in the purest French tradition. As his fame grew in the country, his son, Patrick added new products to the line-up to include wallpapers, wall coverings, carpets, furniture, and accessories. Now, third-generation Freys, Matthieu and his two brothers Pierre and Vincent are taking fabric to the next level. So far, the brand had been in the business of providing quality textiles to discerning homeowners in the West, but as markets shift, this French family-run business has set its sights on the East. Currently, Matthieu is director, Asia Pacific. In fact, he was in Mumbai recently for the launch of the new collection.

GROWING UP WITH FABRICS

"I was born with a piece of fabric in my hands. One of my first memories as a child was playing hide and seek with my two brothers between gigantic three metres drops at



Bright colours and pretty motifs make up the Maya Collection

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Wallpaper from the Jungle Collection (left); Matthieu Frey strikes a pose (below)



our headquarters in Paris,” says Matthieu, adding, “My father always sharpened our eyes and sensibility to art and design but never forced us to join the family business. We had to show interest in design, decoration and business, to be part of this beautiful story.” Unlike other heirs, the 33-year-old fabric magnate, didn’t immediately start working in the company; instead, he spent some time in Asia working with companies such as Rémy Cointreau. It wasn’t until after he’d spent some time in Asia that he decided to carry on the family name in this market.

INCEPTION TO FINAL PRODUCT

The moment an idea of a design is born, Patrick works with his team of designers to develop patterns, motifs, colour schemes and try different kinds of weaves at their mill in Northern France. It takes around three to four years to complete the entire collection. “Weaving should be close to perfection before my father decides if it’s a go or not,” says Matthieu. Each piece is made with high-quality materials with luxurious and often interesting tactile

qualities. Aside from more modern fabrics, Pierre Frey is also known for producing Toile de Jouy and Petit Parc fabrics that replicate antique artworks in motif prints on satin. The brand today has more than 7,000 different items in their inventory. The company also manages some other prestigious brands such as Braquenié, Fadini Borghi, Boussac and Le Manach.

INDIAN CONNECTION

“We have been working from London, Singapore and other Asian markets and with a certain number of clients in India (mostly private and residential),” says Matthieu, adding, “Now, we want to first focus on reaching out to exclusive clients amongst the main cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta, Pune and Bangalore.” The best part is that they intend to launch their 2016 collection simultaneously in Paris and Mumbai.

PRICE ₹8,500 onwards

AT Le Mill, First Floor, Pheroze Building (above Indigo Deli), Colaba Mumbai

How to Cook in Style

Top architects take a leaf out of their design portfolio and tell us how you can select and create a standout kitchen that is in sync with your needs

By RIDHI KALE



A key feature here is the natural ventilation



CHITRA VISHWANATH, 53
Biome Environmental
Solutions Pvt Ltd, Bangalore

MAKE YOUR KITCHEN ECO-FRIENDLY

With a practice that focuses on sustainability and ecologically sound construction, architect Chitra Vishwanath has turned many-a-project into a green wonderland using mud bricks and rainwater harvesting, to name a few techniques. So, could the kitchen be far behind? The eco-friendly features introduced by her in this kitchen include use of wood over ply (all the wood can be reused anytime again) and a focus on natural ventilation. The wood used is teak but she uses this in very thin strips joined together. Further, since she favours hand-crafting, the entire kitchen was completed on site by a team of specially trained carpenters.

PRICE ₹4 lakh (approximately, without equipment);

AT www.biome-solutions.com

The kitchen has a bar unit integrated in its design



Photograph by SEBASTIAN ZACHARIAH (PHOTOGRAPHIX)

DESIGN A MULTI-PURPOSE KITCHEN

The kitchen in this apartment in Bandra, Mumbai, is designed to merge with the living room. So, the living extends into the open kitchen on one side and has a verandah dining on the other side.

Sliding doors that separate the verandah and living room slide into a pocket such that the kitchen, living and dining become one large seamless space. To keep the space clutter-free the utilities and amenities have been tucked away. All the equipment, fridge, freezer, dishwasher and ovens are built into the existing design, while utility drawers are created with built in compartments for spice jars and cutlery (all custom made in solid teak wood and with flexible arrangement). Designed by architect duo Robert Verrijt and Shefali Balwani, the space is underlined with a solid oak wood counter and oak-veneered panels that contrasts well with a blackened steel paneling and bar unit. A generous pantry in the kitchen has all daily supplies conveniently stacked, but they can also be completely shut off by two pocket-folding doors, thereby becoming one with the oak wood panelled wall. Perfect for those who don't like clutter

PRICE ₹8 lakh (approximately, without equipment);

AT www.architecturebrio.com



ROBERT VERRIJT, 36
SHEFALI BALWANI, 37
Architecture Brio, Mumbai

An open plan kitchen in a penthouse in Rajkot



DIPEN GADA, 46
Dipen Gada & Associates,
Baroda

PLAY WITH A MINIMALIST KITCHEN DESIGN

Many people design a stylish home but put the kitchen into a dark corner. A chic space demands a good looking yet utilitarian cook-room. And that's exactly what architect Dipen Gada has done in this 240-square-foot kitchen, located in a penthouse in Rajkot. Gada has used white to enhance the look of the space. Equipped with the latest in-built gadgets such as a silent chimney, microwave oven and fridge, it is a modular unit with soft closing drawers. The only mandate from the client was to make the kitchen as open and clutter free as possible; with good ventilation supporting Indian style cooking. Gada did that with a powerful chimney and a clean, straight line design.

PRICE ₹7 lakh (approximately, without equipment);
AT www.dipengada.com

An open plan kitchen is recommended if you are not fussed about guests peering in

The solid wood kitchen island contrasts well with the steel legs



MALLIKA KUMAR, 49
NARAYAN MOORTHY, 49
Kumar Moorthy & Associates, New Delhi



CREATE AN INTERACTIVE KITCHEN

One might ask why go in for an open plan kitchen if space is not an issue? So that the person cooking in this kitchen becomes part of the activity of the family and guests in the living space; is able to surround himself or herself with verdant views; and the act of food preparation becomes part of entertaining. Architects Mallika Kumar and Narayan Moorthy go on to explain how in this New Delhi farmhouse, there is a separate service kitchen for the staff and this 240 square feet kitchen is for the owners to use. An interesting feature is the solid wood kitchen top island imported from China. What's more? The kitchen is located next to the dining table that was originally a Naga communal spice pounder.

PRICE on request;

AT www.kumarmoorthy.com



PRASHANT CHAUHAN, 35
ANU CHAUHAN, 33
 Zero9, Mumbai

USE EARTHY TONES AND WARM TEXTURES

Since the lady of the house (in this apartment in Mumbai) was fond of cooking, she did not want to leave the visual contact with the guest while entertaining them. The idea was to turn the kitchen into the heart of the home, rather than the living room. Therefore, the kitchen was planned as a semi-open one, which gave the owner the freedom to stay connected with the guests right from the entry point to the dining zone. The space has been done up using wooden shutters complimented with a modern G4 stone platform. Tiles in earthen hues, lighting below the cabinets, shelves that act as a partition between the living area and the kitchen and brass accessories give it a unique look. Architects Prashant and Anu Chauhan have used a modern design layout for the kitchen enhanced with the use of traditional hues and accessories.

PRICE ₹7 lakh (approximately, without appliances);

AT www.zero9.in

Photographs by SEBASTIAN ZACHARIA and RASHMI MALLYA



Semi-open kitchen (above); task lighting below the cabinets (right); tiles clubbed together to create pretty patterns (extreme right)





A vertical garden and skylight enhances the look of the kitchen



RAJIV SAINI, 44
Rajiv Saini & Associates,
Mumbai

BRING THE OUTSIDE INSIDE

In a house designed by architect Rajiv Saini on Portobello Road in London's Notting Hill area, he conceived an open plan living and kitchen space. The kitchen area is about 13 feet x 15 feet, that is about 195 square feet. The material palette and finishes are an extension of the materials used throughout the living space. Douglas fir timber runs on the floor and on the cabinets, with an island in the centre, topped in brushed stainless steel. In order to bring natural light into this window less space at the rear of the town house, Saini created a generous sky light and added a green vertical garden to bring an element of nature. The appliances used are all high end, and many of them are concealed. Since it is part of the open plan layout, the central island table allows the clients to use it as a multi functional dining and work space.

PRICE ₹30 lakh (approximately)

AT www.rajivsaini.com

USE DRAMATIC FLOORING IN A SMALL KITCHEN

Architects Anand Menon and Shobhan Kothari believe that kitchens were previously the domain of service help of the house; today as the demographic has changed, people have found themselves involved in household chores, hence the idea of kitchen as a personal space has emerged. The 150 square feet kitchen in a house in Mumbai is a small, open plan kitchen with a central island, complete with kitchen stools. The island has shelves that let you stash bric-à-brac. However, the highlight of this space is the geometric flooring made by mixing and matching tiles of different patterns.

PRICE on request;

AT www.adnd.in



ANAND MENON, 41
SHOBHAN KOTHARI, 40
(ABOVE)
ADND or Atelier Design N
Domain, Mumbai

The geometric floor
of this small kitchen
stands out

Cutting Edge Designs

The new-age kitchen is synonymous with a modular unit. Here's all you need to know before selecting one.



SEEMA KHOSLA
Director & Designer,
Ideas Kitchens n
Interiors

While modular kitchens are designed for ease and functionality, they also look chic and stylish. However, before purchasing one, planning is required for placement of appliances depending on whether you need a built-in or a free standing. In a well-planned modular kitchen, storage can be created even in a

small space. One should start by planning a layout, the installation points for chimney, microwaves, RO, cabinets and other fittings, and finally, shortlist the materials to be used. Further, the number of people who would work in the kitchen at the same time will also determine the layout.

WHAT'S ON OFFER

A modular kitchen means a cook room where the entire cabinetry can be broken into modules. However, they can be divided into two types. First, there is the semi-modular kitchen, where the modules cannot be dismantled. Here, fancy fittings and drawers are added for utility and carpenter completes the project on site. Within this category the partitions can either be made of stone or a wood derivative such as plywood and MDF (medium-density fibreboard). The second type is the full modular kitchen, where modules can be dismantled. Such kitchens are factory made; only installation is done at the site. They have screw-less units, they are pest free, laden with modern fittings and provides optimum utility of space. Here the cabinetry can be plywood, particle board MDF or HDF, or WPC (wood polymer composite). You need to choose what works for you and is within your budget as well.

Some modular kitchens allow users to hide the appliances behind cabinets





High gloss lacquer panels are popular in modular kitchens

CHOOSE GOOD QUALITY FITTINGS

Opt for high quality materials, which have great manufacturing finishing for controlling pests. Materials such as stone, steel, glass and wood are good options. Select materials like laminates without embossing or grooving, high gloss acrylic finish and glass, which are easy to clean, last long and are durable. Next, choose a colour that goes well with the interiors of your home. Remember, strong and tough cabinets will always last longer. While ordering the kitchen, read as many as reviews of the company. Go for a company that has good testimonials and has a local service centre (as after sales is very important).

A NEAT LAYOUT WORKS BEST

Arranging according to different utility sections such as washing, dry storage, refrigerator and freezer, cooking (hob, microwave and oven), and preparation helps you create an easy work flow. Spices and condiments can be placed near the cooking area; while a large unit with deep drawers works well for cooking utensils. The place to stack water bottles should be near the sink area. Storage of onions and potatoes should be near the sink where the peels can be disposed off. As for crockery cabinets, they should be placed near the entry.

IT SHOULD BE LOW ON MAINTENANCE

A modular kitchen requires some maintenance so that you can keep its function ability to the maximum.

Clean the filters of your chimney The air that is sucked through the filters reminisces of smoke and steam like dust and grease that get stuck in it and if they are not cleaned it will hinder the suction capacity of the chimney that you are using.

The water area of a kitchen Though the aluminum covered panels of the sink area will help in avoiding any rotting but a continuous flow of water on any kind of material can be detrimental thus take care that no faucets under the sink are not leaking. The continuous flow of water may cause the panel to rust and thus lead to breakage if exposure to a flow of water is continuous.

Drawers are sensitive The maximum capacity that a modular kitchen drawer can hold is up to 70 kg but if you lean on it, when you are trying to access something, it loosens the channels on which it is running and if done continuously it may break.

Keep it clean and clear Regularly wipe kitchen surfaces with a clean cloth and disinfectant spray. Coffee and juice stains can be easily removed by adding a little hydrogen peroxide and a few drops of ammonia in water. For a sparkling kitchen tiles and floor, mix half a cup of baking soda or vinegar to two gallons of water and scrub with a sponge or a string mop. Wash your vessels and cutting board properly with anti-bacterial soap and wipe it with a clean cloth.

PRICE ₹80,000 (8x10ft, L-shaped semi-modular), ₹1.30 lakh (8x10ft L-shaped fully modular)

AT SF-97, Galleria Market, Phase IV, Gurgaon

Cook Up a Storm

From warming drawers to wine chillers, a look at top ten gadgets and gizmos that make life in the kitchen easier, smarter and simpler

By RIDHI KALE



Wine and Dine

So, you have the most expensive wine that money can buy, but how will you store it? Finding a solution to that problem is **MIELE** with their new wine unit available with model KWT 6832 SGS. The wine storage conditioning unit ensures wine is stored in the ideal conditions, allowing it to mature and bringing it to the perfect temperature. Precise and constant temperature control, maintaining the right air quality and humidity, keeping the wines vibration free and UV protection doors are just some of its features. Made using stainless steel the unit comes with sommelier set, which makes it possible to decant wine in the unit and to prepare for serving.

PRICE ₹7.5 lakh; **AT** www.miele.in

Steamy Scene

Healthy cooking aficionados will love this one. With the Nagold J-Series Combi-Steam oven from **HAFELE**, you can cook two or more types of foods at once without the flavours transferring from one to another. It releases steam eight times faster than a regular steam oven, thus reducing cooking time. It also has features like feather touch control technology and functions like auto menu, auto-defrost, child lock and refillable water tank.

PRICE ₹76,000;

AT www.hafeleindia.com





Stay Warm

Whether you are keeping food warm, preheating crockery, thawing delicate frozen foods or simply in need of extra storage space, a fully coordinated **SIEMENS** warming drawer is ideal for modern kitchens. Part of the iQ700 range, it has a push and pulls mechanism, so the door opens and closes with a touch of a button. The warmer drawer can accommodate weight up to 25kg. The key features are, frameless glass design, stainless steel cavity, blue indicator lights and rotary control function.

PRICE ₹65,000 to ₹75,000;

AT www.siemens-home.com/in

Pure, for Sure

Based on Ozone disinfection technology that kills bacteria, viruses, fungus and other pathogens. The Wall Mounted Vegetable Purifier from **KENT**, effectively oxidises residual chemicals from surface of meat, vegetables and fruits. The device helps in cleaning antibiotics and hormones that invariably remain in meat, fish and other sea foods. Besides dirt and grime, it is also effective in tackling the pesticides problem in fruits and vegetables. The best part, it does not require any service or change of parts.

PRICE ₹6,500; **AT** www.kent.co.in



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The **KITCHENAID** 14-cup food processor with 'EXACTSLICE' innovation has an external lever to adjust slicing from thick to thin without the need to change blades. It comes with a plethora of other attachments such as a reversible and adjustable shredding disc, sliding disc, julienne disc along with multipurpose and dough blades, which makes slicing, shredding, kneading, pureeing and chopping food a fast and simple process. This model has dual shredding settings for fine and medium shredding, and multiple speeds, including high, low and pulse, for better precision and accuracy for both soft and hard foods.

PRICE ₹24,990;

AT www.kitchenaidindia.com



High Tech Tap

Taking its design inspiration from a swan, the Vuelo kitchen collection by Brizo from **DELTA FAUCET COMPANY** forms a graceful, majestic silhouette. Made from brass, products in the collection are available in polished chrome, brilliance stainless, and cocoa bronze finishes with stainless accents. Since it is also equipped with SmartTouch® Technology, simply touch anywhere on the faucet body or handle to turn on or off the water. When you tap the faucet 'on', the LED light indicates SmartTouch is active; when you tap the faucet 'off', the light goes off. This also helps conserve water.

PRICE ₹58,350;

AT Unit 1061/62, 10th Floor, Tower B1, Spaze IT Park, Sector 49, Sohna Road, Gurgaon

Digital Age

The DIGIKOOK, an electric rice cooker and steamer from **BOROSIL** come with 15 hours preset timer, steam tray, serving spatula, measuring cup and nonstick cooking pot. It also has a 'Keep Warm Function' that retains nutrition of rice for up to 12 hours. As for the nonstick pot, it is easy-to-clean and dishwasher safe. For safety, the device has a spillover prevention vent, while for convenient storage it has a detachable power cord.

PRICE ₹4,290;

AT www.myborosil.com





Over the Hood

What happens when you marry a microwave with a chimney? You get MHC (microwave and hood combination) from **WHIRLPOOL**. Not only does this give you much needed counter space, the grill microwave oven has a 51 litre cavity space, while the hood has suction capability of 700m³/hr. With up to 1,000 watts of cooking power the microwave also offers the flexibility to cook all types of food, quickly and easily. Other features include stainless steel exterior and scrolling text display.

PRICE ₹29,990;

AT www.whirlpoolindia.com



Do the Dishes

FRANKE has launched an energy and water efficient dishwasher. Features like 'auto' (that sets the wash cycle in accordance with the soil level of the crockery), 'party' (that washes glass plates in just 40 minutes) and 'speed programmes' (special short cycles which reduce the wash duration by up to 50 per cent), make it stand out. **PRICE** ₹85,000;

AT Franke Appliances Studio, Plot No 86, Crd Samarth Building, SV Road, Khar West, Mumbai



Cool Tool

The Side-by-Side refrigerator from **LG** not only looks smart and has a large storage capacity (1,001 litres) but is also eco-friendly. What makes it unique is its Dual Door-in-Door feature, maximising space for frequently used items. It also reduces the loss of cold air while opening and closing of the refrigerator (47.3 per cent less cold air loss under test conducted at LG in-house laboratory). Further, the multiple doors are equipped to store and provide plenty of space for everyone in the family to stash their food items. The Inverter Linear Compressor in the Dual Door-in-Door keeps food fresh and consumes far less energy. While the Hygiene Fresh technology applies five-layers of air filters that eradicates most contaminants like dust and bacteria, keeping food free from air-borne bacteria.

PRICE ₹3.10 lakh; **AT** www.lg.com/in

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HOME | TRENDS

Cooking f

Practical advice on creating a kitchen
fully-functional and yet reflects your



or One

that's stylish, imaginative,
footloose, single lifestyle



By ANUSHREE BASU-BHALLA

Not to sound like your mother but living alone teaches you a crucial life lesson, you need a place for everything and need to ensure everything is in its place. This little piece of advice becomes even more important when it comes to the kitchen, an area that is very often overlooked when leading a nomadic, devil-may-care single life. Jump to days when you do end up making breakfast for yourself (or someone you wish to impress,) and a functional and cleverly designed kitchen can be the antidote to your morning chaos. Giving kitchen renovation a thought? There are two key factors to consider, as experts break it down to you—the space available and how you plan to use it. So, go back to the drawing board and reassess what works for you before creating a kitchen space that is perfect for your home and your daily needs.

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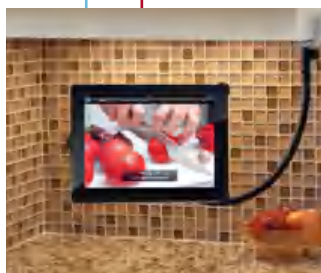
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**HOVERBAR**

The HoverBar is great if you're following recipe apps and tutorials. The adjustable arm rotates the iPad into portrait or landscape positions, and the clamp can attach securely to any surface.

PRICE ₹5,500; **AT** www.amazon.in

**BONHOMIA PORTABLE COFFEE MACHINE**

Titled the Boho, this portable coffee machine from Bonhomia brews a perfect cup with just a press of the button. **PRICE** ₹9,995 (black), 12,995 (red); **AT** Godrej Nature's Basket

**ASSESS YOUR NEEDS**

Your single lifestyle mirrors all your living spaces, especially the kitchen. "Do you simply need a place to prepare meals or do you want an open-plan living area where you can also entertain your friends? How much cooking do you do and how much storage do you need? It's also good to think about what you don't like about your existing kitchen so you can focus on improving those particular areas when redoing the space," says Sandeep Bohra, chairman, Bohra Homes, the retailers of Italian modular kitchen brand Stosa Cucine, in India.

SET YOUR BUDGET

Nail those must-haves in your kitchen—the appliances, lighting and fixtures—and make an honest budget around them. "Just remember that trends come and go, so choose one that is not only a reflection of your lifestyle, but will also cater comfortably to how you cook," says Vishal Raman, head sales, Franke Faber India Pvt Ltd. Leave some room for scalability especially if there are prospects of a second person joining you in the kitchen.

SPACE MAXIMISING IDEAS

Unless you are born wealthy, most single people are happy to stretch their legs in a one BHK or a studio. Hence getting a functional kitchen in such a tiny space can be a challenge. "Go for single bowl sinks, which can save a foot or more of counter space," advises Sumita Somany, director, Evok, a decor and lifestyle brand, adding, "Also, opt for wall mounted storage and high ceiling cabinets and pull out pantries." In terms of cabinets, the "bridge" design with two side columns connected by base cabinets and a linear row of wall cabinets, is a great space maximiser. Alternatively, you can use disappearing accessories like pull-out tables, invent original shelves or use the columns to house appliances.

WHAT'S A PERFECT PLAN?

"In most cases, the size and shape of your room will determine the kitchen plan," says Sandeep Bohra. "If you live in a studio apartment, the linear arrangement can help you save space," he adds. Single-wall kitchens, where the three most important elements of a kitchen, the refrigerator, sink and stove, are aligned on one wall. The efficiency of single-wall kitchens comes with the spacing and location of these three elements, the sizing and articulation of the countertops, and the use (if any) of a nearby kitchen table.



Ecocompatta by Veneta Cucine is a single wall kitchen module perfect for studio apartments

FUN AND FUNCTIONAL SURFACES

As a bachelor after you have set your budget and made your plan, you need to select materials for the countertops and islands. Keep it functional and simple but don't be afraid to add interest. Speaking about a continuing shift in the usage of surfaces in contemporary bachelor kitchens, Anuj Jain, CEO, Jindal Lifestyle/Jindal Architecture says, "Our cooking habits have changed over the years. Today the kitchens are sleek and contemporary yet functional and technologically advanced. In this regard, a complete stainless steel kitchens have become increasingly popular." A hard composite worktop, a polished concrete sink, a contemporary tap, these elements are all natural partners to more relaxed fittings such as a range cooker or a painted larder cupboard. To blur the boundaries, opt for neutral shades and organic finishes, a stone-coloured worktop, for example. The sky is the limit when it comes to selecting textures and hues for your kitchen.

LIGHTING COMES LAST

Kitchens (whether used by singles or families) need three kinds of lighting as per task (for cooking, prep-ping and illuminating cabinets), accent (for dining and ambient), and decoration (an optional use of a statement lighting piece). "Plan the lighting when you're thinking about the plumbing and do so before painting the walls," advises Harsh Chitale, CEO, Philips Lighting, South Asia. However, those living alone prefer lighting that last long, are maintenance free and cost effective. "Lighting prices begin at ₹575 for an LED bulb and go up to ₹40,000 for a smart lighting by Philips called Hue that can be used to light up different areas of the kitchen," he adds. Your choices will depend on the size of the space and ceiling height."

PRICE All prices are on request, as they will vary according to materials used and gizmos selected.

AT evok.in; arttdinox.com; bohrahomes.in; venetacucine.com; www.lighting.philips.co.in

TREND REPORT

Colours, patterns and materials combine to create bright new ideas and unconventional decor and design statements this new year



A collection of ceramic, terracotta and glass pieces

Photographs by Jaypore.com



SHILPA SHARMA
Co-founder
Jaypore.com

While trends must have the capacity to stay relevant for some time, one needs a dash of fresh ideas, every now and then, to breathe life into the mundane. And what better time than the advent of a new year. So, here's looking at some of the bigger trends that will not only help you decorate and reinvent the interiors of your home, but also stay ahead of the design curve.

ADD A PERSONAL TOUCH WITH HANDMADE PIECES

A great way of personalising your space is to use handloom textiles in home furnishings and handmade decorations that have timeless appeal and come from a place close to nature; so they will always be relevant. The design industry is increasingly becoming aware of the importance of supporting India's artisan communi-

ties, each doing its own bit to revive languishing crafts. I think traditional designs accompanying organic fibres, natural materials and organic shapes will make an appearance in everything from home furnishings, accents, wall art and bed linens in the coming year.

PRICE ₹690 to ₹26000

GIVE THE OLD A MODERN TWIST

One of the most inspiring 'young' design trend at the moment is to be tethered to our Indian roots while the presentation goes contemporary and global. So, we are likely to see the popularity of accessories like digital prints with very Indian design inspirations, hand painted decoupage storage boxes and trays; you may see more inventive accessories and home accents like silver diyas on semi-precious stone bases, contemporary ceramic and terracotta serve-ware mixed with modern materials etc. This year will bring in bold, geometric shapes mixed on organic materials to create a diffused, stylish looks.

PRICE ₹2,000 to ₹4,250

EXPERIMENT WITH TRADITIONAL ART

India has a very rich heritage of traditional painting forms like Gond, Pichwai, Pattachitra, Mata-ni-Pachedi and Madhubani art and we work with a lot of artisan communities that produce these art forms. Intricately painted Madhubanis and hand-painted Kalamkaris as wall art, also make Indian art relevant to a global audience, a trend that has been on the upswing for a while now.

PRICE Indian art range begins at ₹600 (approx)

GET INSPIRED BY ART DECO

Another trend that will have a lot of traction in the coming year is bright, metallic home decor accessories reminiscent of the Art Deco era. We can look forward to lavish materials such as brass and silver to be placed in several homes. Further, bright jewelled hues on everything from walls to furniture, glittering table lamps and bold light fixtures like Sunburst Chandeliers as well as fabrics like silk and chintz, will be popular.

PRICE ₹2,000 to ₹15,000

Decorate your home with these brass vintage finds





Screen printed table linens in refreshing colours for a welcome modification to the dining area

GROW GREENS INDOORS

The trend of adding patches of green, like a living wall to home interiors, will continue and grow bigger in the coming year. Since living spaces are going to keep decreasing in size, homeowners are now more than ever aware of the benefits of adding some greenery to enclosed spaces, so you will see an array of 'green accents' in homes now. Think succulent plants, foliage and dry flowers. Cute planters can be placed in the interesting nooks in the living areas.

PRICE ₹250 to ₹3,000

CHOOSE UPCYCLED FURNISHINGS

Upcycling is the new global mantra and India has been at it for a very long time now with traditional upcycled fabrics like *khes*, *kantha* and *gudri* having been around for ages. But I see a new trend of using contemporary upcycled home accessories and furnishings instead of the traditional use of upcycled

fabrics for a uniquely Indian design language that can be understood globally.

PRICE ₹990 to ₹3,000

PLAY WITH VINTAGE ELEMENTS

Industrial accents like old carts, big wheels and rough wooden benches lend a vintage-urban appeal. You could also infuse some old-world style into your home with wonderful finds like old maps and vintage tribal clothing. It gives your home a very lived-in aura and I think this trend is going to catch on in a big way in India soon. Most home decor projects will require time and investment to take shape. But if you are in a hurry, try introducing some statement area rugs to your floors, or turning a hallway or gallery into a vignette with hand-picked paintings and personal photos or framed objects and you could do the new in a jiffy.

PRICE ₹600 to ₹39,990

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A statement chair in steel and leather in the living area

Photographs by AVNEESH KUMAR

NEW LEASE OF LIFE

An old bungalow in the Capital gets a contemporary makeover in the hands of Delhi-based Studio An-V-Thot Architects

By RIDHI KALE



Interesting art and bright textiles make up the family lounge



Architects Ankita Sweety (right) and Pratyosh Chanda

Picture this. The year is 1980, the location, a peaceful residential colony in the western part of Delhi (in Kirti Nagar), where sits a quiet home, secluded from the hustle bustle of city life. Cut to 2013, the neighbourhood has become chaotic; the house now sits next to a busy road and bears the stamp (and ravages) of time. That's when the homeowners decided to bring in the experts, architects Ankita Sweety and Pratyosh Chanda of Delhi-based Studio An-V-Thot Architects. Giving the old bungalow a new look wasn't their only challenge as the client (CM Jain) was the owner of the first and second floor, while the ground floor belonged to someone else. "It is a duplex, where we had to de-clutter the place to bring in an open plan and let the house breathe," explains Sweety, adding, "Over the years the family had expanded, but the space did not factor their needs. It was a challenge because of the limitations of the old building, but with careful study of the structure, we were eventually able to dismantle walls that were not needed. Dismantling was tiresome as there were a number of stone domes and stone wall cladding as well. Stone was present in one form or another in almost every area of the home."

DECODING THE LAYOUT

As you enter, a giant white wall of *jali* greets you. This acts as a partition between the dining and the lobby, which then travels vertically to become the railing on the

first floor. "This was made using wooden frames holding square laser cut MDF boards painted in white duco," says Chandan. The lower floor has a living room, a lounge adjacent to a double height lobby, a kitchen overlooking the dining area, a powder room, master bedroom with a walk-in dresser and closet. A terrace-cum-courtyard has been pulled inside to touch the inner parts of the floor, which can also be opened up completely to become a part of the master bedroom. The second floor has a foyer, the newly wed's bedroom-cum-lounge, guest room, family lounge, massage and meditation room, multipurpose room and a powder room.

LIVING IT UP

There are two living rooms. One is formal with dark wood flooring and dark brown leather sofas. It has a false ceiling with wallpaper wrapped floating roof

combined with linear bands of wooden frames. The rich ambience has been enhanced using a large back lit wall hanging. The other is more like a lounge and in contrast has a relaxed spatial feel with grey sofas and bright cushions. Another interesting space on the first floor is the master bedroom. It was constructed by combining two bedrooms from the previous plan. The focal point here is the courtyard with a vertical garden. "The master bedroom is placed at the rear of the house, which faces south west, to bring in indirect sunlight resulted in the creation of a small courtyard-like space. It is a private outdoor terrace that can also become a part of the bedroom with the help of three panelled UPVC sliding doors," says Sweetie. The bedroom houses a private sit out area, a study and a walk-in dress-cum-closet, which leads to the private washroom equipped with a Jacuzzi and steam.



The kitchen has a wide island counter



The formal living room (left); a small courtyard attached to the master bedroom (below)



DINE A DOZEN

In the dining, what sets the dining table apart is that it is fashioned as a glowing square box of back lit, laser cut corian with a glass on top. The laser cut corian design is repeated on the ceiling as well. The back wall of this area is covered with sky blue patterned wallpaper that has three vertical niches with glass mosaic clad inside them. The dining area is connected to the kitchen. The cook room has a wide island counter and the colours here are a mix of light and dark grey. The kitchen also has an attached service balcony.

A HOME WITHIN A HOME

One of the most important spaces on the second floor is the newly wed's bedroom. "The idea was to create their room in such a way so as to accommodate a complete home within it where they can cater to their guests, work at the study, read at the library and enjoy the lounge and private sit-out in the terrace," says Chandan. This was

achieved through linear extension of the existing room so as to accommodate a living area within it's periphery. "A study was fashioned such that it turned into the wall, extending to the ceiling and finally dropping at the floor while becoming a library with show compartments. With this, the room was visually divided into two halves, where one was the bed area and the other a lounge," adds Sweetie. Further, a separate pocket was attached to the bed area, which is used as a walk-in dressing room; this also opens into a private terrace.

OTHER SPACES

The multipurpose room is currently being used as a gym, while the family lounge has a relaxed feel. Adjacent to this is a fairly small meditation room opening up to the north east side of the house, bringing in uniform day light. Designed to suit the needs of its inhabitants, this home is a marriage of form and function, drama and design.

AT www.avtarchitects.com

WORLD WATCH

A quick round-up of what's trending in the international design world

Global Dining

British interiors company Timothy Oulton is all set to revive the lost art of hosting with a daring global dinner party project. Four completely different dinner parties are being hosted on three continents, with each one built around a different selection from the Timothy Oulton collection. The project has already kicked off in dramatic style in China, followed by LA, Amsterdam and with New York. After all, the brand believes the best dinner parties start with captivating interiors.

PRICE on request

AT www.timothyoulton.com



Functional Art

Rolling history, culture, art and design into one is the Versailles sofa from the Portuguese brand Boca Do Lobo. The stunning design and architecture of the Versailles Palace inspired the creation of this stunning sofa. The furniture piece has a wood structure and panels, which is then layered with resin and finished with restoration techniques similar to those used with stone.

PRICE €27,210 (₹19.24 lakh approx)

AT www.bocadolobo.com

Branching Out

Last month Victoria & Albert Museum in London unveiled a unique light installation at its grand entrance. Created by Sarthak Sahil Design Co as part of the V&A India Festival, Kalpataru (named after a wish-fulfilling divine tree in Hindu mythology) is made from metal frames, handcrafted from brass sheets by a team of expert silversmiths and enhanced with a hand beaten texture popularly seen in traditional utensils used in Indian kitchens.

PRICE on request

AT www.sahilsarthak.com



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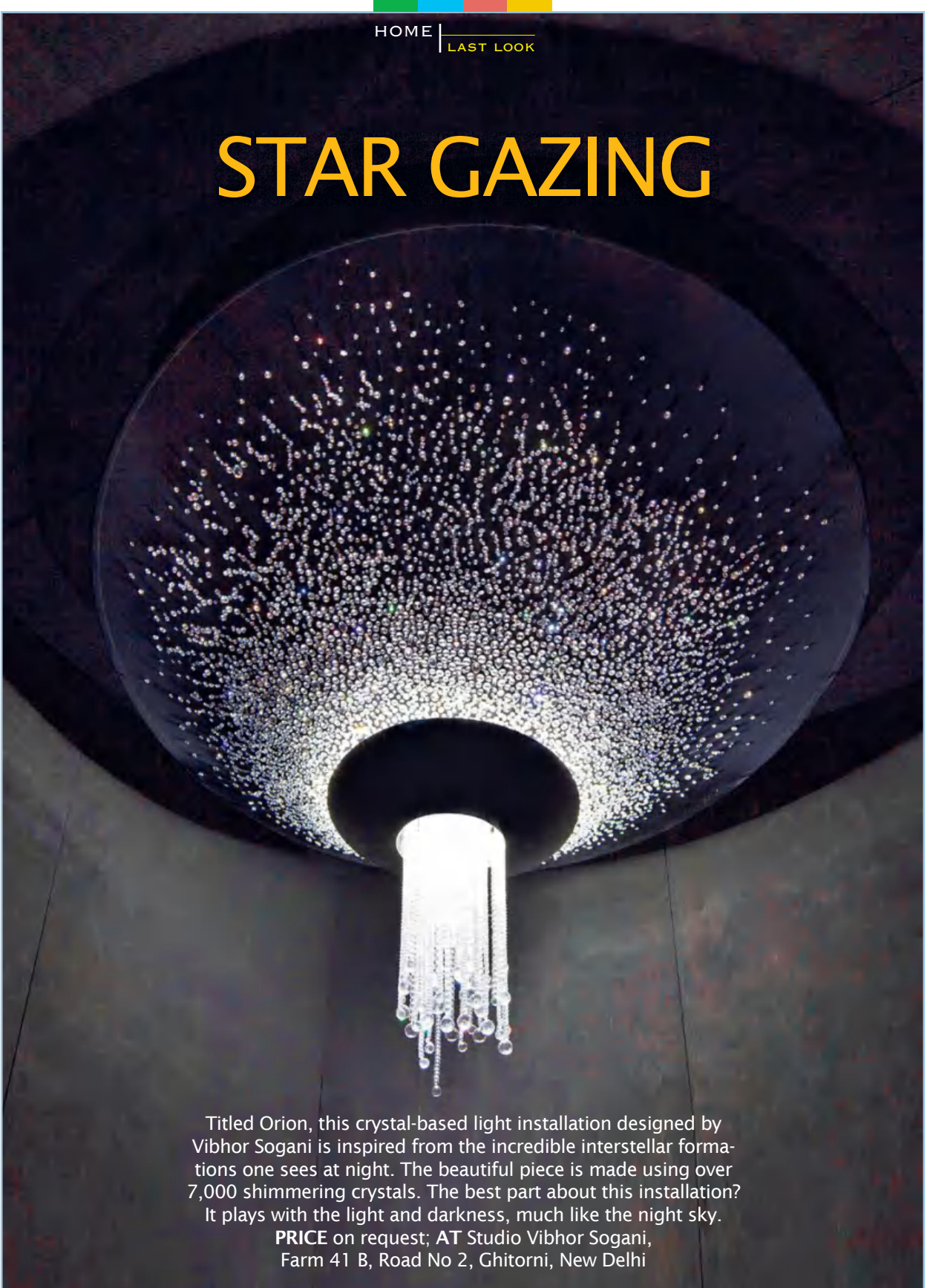
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HOME | LAST LOOK

STAR GAZING



Titled Orion, this crystal-based light installation designed by Vibhor Sogani is inspired from the incredible interstellar formations one sees at night. The beautiful piece is made using over 7,000 shimmering crystals. The best part about this installation? It plays with the light and darkness, much like the night sky.

PRICE on request; **AT** Studio Vibhor Sogani,
Farm 41 B, Road No 2, Ghitorni, New Delhi

09:41



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SIMPLY KOLKATA

SREEJA SEN (LEFT) AND
ARJUN CHAKRABORTY AT THE
TEA PAVILION AT ITC SONAR

DATE NIGHT

FIND OUT WHAT STARS ARE PLANNING FOR VALENTINE'S DAY

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Tarun Bhattacharya
(left) and Sanchita
Bhattacharya (right)

COVER STORY

Love Me Do s-4
Five couples reveal their
plans for Valentine's Day
this year.

CITY BUZZ

Into the City s-10
Eleven things to look
forward to in the city.

Cover photo by SUBIR HALDER

Sreeja Sen's wardrobe by CORAL
Makeup by MALAY ROY

Photograph by SUBIR HALDER

OUR PICK of the month

Record Breaking Till February 27

Bani Abidi's second solo at Experimenter, *The Man Who Clapped For 97 Hours*, is a homage to average human beings who mark their space in history through seemingly inconsequential things. Told through fictional videos, newspaper clippings and more, Abidi spins a quirky narrative.

The video installation also includes Funland—Karachi Series II, which is a continuation of Abidi's ongoing exploration of the demographic, economic and cultural changes in her home city, Karachi. The first works from this series were photographs she orchestrated in 2009,



titled Karachi Series I.
At Experimenter, 2/1, Hindusthan Road
Tel 24630645

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Anything newsworthy? Please email us at: simplykolkata@intoday.com

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LOVE ME DO

SIMPLY KOLKATA SPEAKS TO FIVE COUPLES
FROM THE CITY ON THEIR FAVOURITE WAYS
TO CELEBRATE THE DAY OF LOVE

By MALINI BANERJEE

CELEBRATE IN STYLE

The Tea Pavilion, ITC Sonar

Love doesn't cost a thing, but sometimes its expression can be priceless. This bespoke experience at The Tea Pavilion in ITC Sonar would be quite the grand gesture for wooing your loved one. The wood and glass pavilions floating on the hotel's lily pool, decked up with candles and flowers are designed to transport you to a world of your own.

You can order a four-course menu from any of the five signature restaurants of the hotel including Peshawri, Pan Asian, Dum Pukht, West View Bar and Grill and Eden Pavilion. The menu isn't pre-set and can be customised to your taste on request. Also part of the offer, is a bottle of champagne, which can be announced and popped open at special moments.

To make the experience all the more special, a butler will be dedicated to your service for the evening. If you are planning on popping the question, your

butler can be a useful ally. Enlist their help to hide the ring in a champagne glass or in the dessert. With music in the background, lilies in bloom outside, and flickering candlelight, the ambience is just perfect for a romantic rendezvous.

► **PRICE** On request

► **AT** The Tea Pavilion, ITC Sonar, JBS Haldane Avenue

► **TEL** 23454545

COUPLESPEAK

► **ARJUN CHAKRABORTY, ACTOR** Time together is so precious because we rarely get to be that way anymore. I like to go out for a nice meal or perhaps just watch a movie together.

► **SREEJA SEN, HR PROFESSIONAL** Arjun has always been very extravagant with his gestures. He's always been the one more likely to book private tables in hotels or send me bouquets of pink roses at office after a fight.

Sreeja (left)
and Arjun (right)
at ITC Sonar

Photographs by
SUBIR HALDER



GARDEN VARIETY

Victoria Memorial grounds

If you're bored of history and other options aren't exactly budget friendly, try the tried and tested route. With the winters fading, it won't be long before sitting in the Maiden, basking in the sun becomes a sweaty proposition instead of a pleasant one. Take advantage of these few days to spend some time in the open air.

Surrounded by Victoria Memorial Hall, St. Pauls Cathedral and the Raj Bhavan area, it can make for quite a long walk around its perimeter. Hop on for a *tonga* ride around the open air park, or cross the road to spend time at the Victoria Memorial Hall gardens. Last year's winner of INDIA TODAY's Safaigiri Awards, the Victoria Memorial grounds are one of the cleanest in the city. Curator and secretary of the monument, Jayanta Sengupta is often amused by the garden's popularity with lovebirds and even has an anecdote about it. "Once I had to get some official work done at a very short notice. Given the city babu work culture, I had no hope of getting it done. But one gentleman took me aside and got my work done at record pace. His reason? He dated his wife in Victoria Memorial," laughs Sengupta.

COUPLESPEAK

► ADHIRAJ THIRANI, ENTREPRENEUR

For us, our best dates are spa dates where we spend an entire day getting massages and then later have nice meal together.

► ESHA SETHI THIRANI, DESIGNER

In our initial days of courtship, we dined in five-star hotels every Valentine's Day. But we are tired of the overload of hearts and flowers. Now our best times are about partying together.

Esha (left) and Adhiraj (right) at the Victoria Memorial grounds



HIT THE ROAD

Tarun Bhattacharya (left) and Sanchita Bhattacharya (right)

Mustard fields off the highways

While many holiday destinations are a short flight or train ride away, sometimes a road trip is the best way to spend time together. Hit the road for either a long drive or a vacation in any of tourist towns close to Kolkata. Whether you take NH1, NH6 or even any of the smaller state highways, mustard fields bordering the highway are in full bloom now and offer spectacular views.

Stop for tea and kachoris at Sher-e-Punjab or its swankier neighbour, Food Express in Kolaghat (NH6). While Sher-e-Punjab offers you good old highway fare, Food Express with its food court-like format and restaurants and bars can be a decent place to stop for a meal and a pint. They aren't yet equipped to handle a huge rush of people at the same time, so if you happen to be parked along a tourist bus, do use the time you wait for your orders for a quick photo shoot

next to the kitschy Indian truck decor. If you take NH1, stop by Azad Hind Dhaba for their *aloo paratha* and kebabs. Just off the Dhaba, there's also a reasonably empty Café Coffee Day so you can stock up for the trip or choose its robust brews over Azad Hind's milky tea.

► **AT** Off NH1, or NH6, 45 kms from the city

COUPLE SPEAK

► **SANCHITA BHATTACHARYA, DANCER** I love these road trips and the smell of freshly grown greens just off the field. Tarun drives even when we have concerts in the US or Europe and it's always a delightful way to spend time together.

► **PANDIT TARUN BHATTACHARYA, CLASSICAL MUSICIAN** We go on long drives often, as either's work bring us here. We drive to Asanasol or sometimes to Sanchita's home in Bandel.

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Cooking at home

Srijato (left) and Durba (right) at their home in Kolkata

Sometimes you needn't travel far and wide. A simple home cooked meal and the right amount of effort and intention can be enough to make a day special. If you're a first time cook, try and stay away from elaborate meals, instead go for simple grills and salads like watermelon and cheese salad.

"If you're cooking for Valentine's Day there are some obvious choices like fresh figs and strawberries. You could also work with aphrodisiacs like honey, chocolate, coffee, oysters and apricots in various menus," says chef Rahul Arora of Bon Appetit and Café Pranah. If you'd rather leave it to the professionals, Kitchen Stories by Monica Daswani caters meals for two for special occasions. You can also

cheat a little and pass it off as your own.

COUPLESPEAK

► **SRIJATO, WRITER AND POET** These lines by poet and lyricist Javed Akhtar apply to couples like us, caught up in daily life—*Pehle dono waqt chura kar miltey the, ab milte hain jab phursat milti hai* (Earlier, we would try steal time and meet, now we meet only when we are free).

► **DURBA BANDYOPADHYAY, ACADEMIC** One of our most memorable times was when he was away for a four-month-long fellowship in Iowa. The moment when I spotted him in the airport, felt like blood was flowing in my veins again. I stayed with him for a week and we stayed in.





Rimpa (right) and Soumen (left)
at the steps of St John's Church

BYGONE ERAS

St John's Church

In the heart of Kolkata's office *para*, just off Raj Bhavan, lies a slice of the city's history that many have forgotten. St John's Church, was one of the first public buildings to be built by the East India Company in Kolkata. It's also the city's third oldest church.

It's architecture and brick and stone structure are unique for its time but what makes it even more interesting are the memorials in and around the church. Literature and history buffs may be interested to know that James Achilles Kirkpatrick, the central character of William Dalrymple's *White Mughals*, has a memorial here. In fact, Dalrymple has been known to say, that out of the seven generations of his family that were born in the city, three of his ancestors are also buried in the church's graveyard.

The monument also houses Jeffrey Zoffany's painting of *The Last Supper*. But if the history is tedious for you, come here for some peace and quiet and the verdant gardens. Its neo-classical style and massive pillars, or stained

glass windows can make for pretty pictures. In the middle of a clamouring, bustling Dalhousie area, that's all that you may need to snatch a few moments of peace and quiet.

► **AT** 2/1, Council House Street, Kiran Shankar Roy Rd, BBD Bagh,
► **TEL** 22436098
► **ENTRY** Rs 10

COUPLESPEAK

► RIMPA SIVA CHAKRABORTY, PERCUSSIONIST

Because we both studied at the Rabindra Bharati University in north Calcutta, our favourite places till date are always around this area. Hedua Park and Basanta Cabin were a favourite as were old monuments like St John's church.

► SOUMEN CHAKRABORTY, PERCUSSIONIST AND RESEARCH SCHOLAR

We have always bonded as much over music, as we have over food. Sometimes, it can be as simple as bringing back home Aminia's biryani and tucking in together.

THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO

11



(Clockwise from top)
Delicacies from the
What's Up menu;
What's Up's
open-air
seating

1 RESTAURANT REVIEW / WHAT'S UP

LOUNGE WITH A VIEW

Southern Avenue in south Kolkata has long been a coveted address for residential areas. But now there is something for food enthusiasts as well. What's Up, a newly-opened rooftop lounge-cum-café on Southern Avenue promises an unforgettable scenic view of the verdant green trees that line the roads, a vast lake and open fields.

The lounge is divided into three areas—wooden interiors with an English pub-like feel with cosy sofas and a wrap around window; an area styled as a modern lounge that has foot massagers and low-seating; and the third is the open air section with high stools and Jacuzzi chairs (with heated water for the winters for diners to soak their feet in).

The menu is focused on sharing platters of snacks with a couple of options for mains. We began our meal with strawberry cheesy shake. Thick and creamy with just the faintest hint of cream cheese it hit the spot perfectly. Next up was the chicken crostini and chicken roulade. The crostini, perfectly crusty and warm with dollops of mozzarella and chicken as toppings, may seem like a starter but given its generous portions, it can be quite filling. Most of their pizzas are thin crust except the boat shaped-pizza, pan-tossed and topped with lots of cheese and bell peppers.

Meal for two Rs 1,000

At 122A, Sixth Floor, Southern Avenue Tel 30859105

■ **By Malini Banerjee**





2 HOME AND AWAY

If you're visiting the city for long and would prefer the comforts of living on your own instead of a hotel, take a look at Novotel's serviced apartments, which are also the city's first in-house serviced apartments in a five-star hotel. The hotel offers 48 studio and one bedroom apartments that are complete with amenities like a kitchenette with microwave, induction plate, toasters, cooking utensil and crockery you can skip the hotel food for a home-cooked meal any time.

AT Kolkata Hotel and Residences, CF-11, Action Area 1C, New Town, Rajarhat
TEL 40323333



3 EAT YOUR HEART OUT

It's not every day you get the offer of unlimited kebabs and buffet for an almost paltry sum. Which is why The Great Kebab Theatre is such a must-try. Find on the menu ten kinds of kebabs (five non-vegetarian and five vegetarian) along with an expansive main course buffet. Kebabs to die for include Lahsuni Machchi, Mutton Kakori Kebab and Anarkali Mahi Tikka. Vegetarian options include Tulsi Paneer Tikka and Soya Ki Galouti.

MEAL FOR TWO Rs 999 **AT** Astor, 15 Shakespeare Sarani **TEL** 22829957



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4 CHILD AT HEART

Kaji Kids is the newest “baby” of the home décor brand, Kaji. Designers and owners Shrivant and Devina More have conceptualised and curated furniture, beddings, wall accents, décor, toys, gifting, birth announcements and much more for children. The store isn't just dotted with products but conceptualised around different themes, with rooms dedicated to nursery, bedrooms, playrooms and functional study areas. The brand also offers a range of textiles—from cot bedding, to baby blankets and cushions for teens.

PRICE Rs 300 onwards

AT Kaji, Garcha First Lane, Ballygunge **TEL** 32507924

5 FASHION FORWARD

Browse through upcoming designer Amrita Chatterjee's label Ahamori's new collection. Inspired by artist Frida Kahlo, the collection is boho-chic with an easy-to-wear style.

PRICE Rs 1,500 onwards

AT Maka Maka 4A/1, Motilal Nehru Road
TEL 983056253



6 MILESTONES AND MORE

Till February 8

Artist Arpana Caur brings back her collection in the city after a gap of nearly twelve years. *Crossing 60* is a collection of her small canvases and compile more than thirty years of work in pencil, pastel and ink.

AT Emami Chisel Art, Emami Tower, 687 Anandapur, EM Bypass
TEL 40113182





7 NEW IN TOWN/UG REINCARNATED

PARTY DESTINATION

Everything about UG Reincarnated, the newly revamped nightclub by Hotel Hindusthan International, reads old wine in a new bottle. But that isn't a bad thing. First Anticlock, then Underground, and now UG Reincarnated, this space isn't new to reinventions. Done up by designer Asha Dhody, UG Reincarnated is done up in a chic combination of steel grey with blue accents.

A 40-ft long bar and a specialised butler service are just some of the highlights of the club. The menu includes Italian, Mexican and Oriental cuisine with a focus on healthy food.

UG Reincarnated also has a private lounge, Zingg, which is separated from the the main club by a virtual curtain created by a laser screen. The lounge has its own bar and comfortable seating, apart from all the facilities of UG Reincarnated. At UG Reincarnated, Hotel Hindusthan International, 235/1, A.J.C. Bose Road
Tel 22830395

Meal for two Rs 1,500 onwards

■ **By Malini Banerjee**



8 LET THERE BE LIGHT

See your home in a different light with products from Marici Experience Centre. The 5000 sq ft store dedicated to lights has a variety of solutions for your home's lighting needs. The store includes a wide range of products, from recessed to surface mounted ceiling fixtures, underwater to ground-embedded fixtures, fans to chandeliers, table lamps to floor lamps, all running on a centrally operated intelligent lighting control system with sections dedicated to architectural lighting, outdoor, lighting, decorative lighting and fans. If you are looking to renovate your home décor or decorate your new house, there is something for everyone here.

PRICE On request

AT Marici Experience Centre, CB69, Sector 1, Salt Lake

TEL 9007493240

9 **EXHIBIT PREVIEW** / LINE BY LINE

A THIN LINE

Line by Line, an exhibition of drawings by Sudhir Patwardhan brings together sketches, preparatory drawings and independent drawings by the artist. Patwardhan's engagement and participation in the cultural activities in Mumbai gives him an acute insight into the cultural, social and political life of the metropolis. His observations of the unstructured growth of the city over the decades, along with a paradigm shift in the social and familial mores of the city, forms the basis of Patwardhan's intimate and charged drawing process.

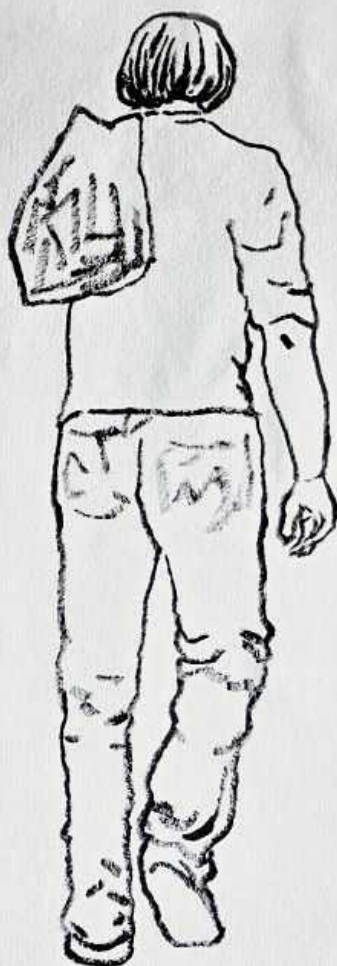
Patwardhan believes that sketches serve three functions in an artist's practice. "I believe drawing is primary to my artistic practice, as indeed it is for many artists. It has three different roles to play—as sketch, as preparatory drawing and as finished, independent drawing. In the sketch book ideas get their first formulation. More structured preparatory drawings



Love (above) and Myth (below), sketches by Patwardhan



Four People (below) will be showcased at Line by Line



become the foundation of paintings, and others are just independent, stand-alone drawings."

His independent and standalone drawing, or sketches that didn't serve as a springing board for other art, are more contemporary in nature and revolve around the human figure. "The single human figure under different conditions of stress — social, domestic and existential, is a recurring subject. Other, related subjects include the urban and suburban environment, home, illness, and the relationships between people," says the artist.

Pictures may say a thousand words, but for Patwardhan the truest words come from bare sketches. "I do believe that because of the directness and bareness of the drawing activity, things can get said in drawing that may escape the more layered and complex processes of painting," he says.

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10 ALL IN ONE

There's one more dine den in Kolkata's IT hub. Jaisalmer, though named after the Rajasthan's fort city, doesn't just serve Rajasthani or even North-West Frontier cuisine but also Asian and Chinese, and grills and tandoor. Done up in bright colours, with window shutters in vivid colours dotting the walls it has a welcoming vibe. The menu includes everything from failsafe classics like reshmi and tikka kebabs to Konjee Crispy Lamb and Kung Pao Chicken.

MEAL FOR TWO Rs 900

AT Jaisalmer, Podium Floor, Globsyn Crystal, Sector 5, EP & GP Block, Salt lake

TEL 7044363636

11 LADIES SPECIAL

If you're in a bind over where to party with the girls in the middle of the week, worry no more. Not one, but two nightclubs at The Park have offers dedicated to women on two nights of the week. For a girls night out at Tantra, the drinks are on the house as DJs Hussain and Aaditya churn out chart-topping hits.

At Roxy, every Thursday is Blush Thursday with different themes for the night. Themes range from *Orange is the New Black* to monochrome parties. Drinks are on the house for the girls while DJs Rudra and Rishi play the best of contemporary EDM. Boy's can drink till they drop for a fixed price as well.

While Roxy with its contemporary vibe, edgy decor and wide cocktail and wine menu is perfect for stylistas in the city looking to lounge with a Cosmopolitan, Tantra is known for its peppy vibe. If all you want to do is dance and in between, grab a few sips of beer and drags on a sheesha, these are the clubs you need to visit.

AT Roxy every Wednesday and Tantra every Thursday, The Park, 17 Park Street

PRICE Rs 1100 per person for stags at Roxy and Rs1200 all inclusive for unlimited drinks at Tantra **TEL** 2249 9000



(Clockwise from top) Interiors of Tantra; Revellers at a night out at Roxy



A MONTHLY CITY MAGAZINE

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Photograph by ABHIJIT PATIL

COVER STORY

The Gurgaon Guide
Here's our guide to the NCR's
hottest 'hood.

s-4

Cover photo by RAJWANT RAWAT

OUR PICK of the month

Carnival Celebration February 5 to 7

The Great Indian Golchakkar (GIG) is a three-day carnival celebrating the gastronomical, artisanal and musical culture of modern India. Coke Studio will be performing a live set at The GIG along with the Karsh Kale Collective, Prateek Kuhad, Hamza and Mannu, Medieval Punditz and many more. On display will be the traditional natural perfumes of Kannauj, Rogan art from Gujarat, stone pottery from Meghalaya, jamdani work from Varanasi, silver filigree work from Orissa, mask making from Majuli and leather craft from Pondicherry, amongst a host of other handicrafts. There will also be a culinary blend of cuisines



from all over the country.
At Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium,
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THE GURGAON GUIDE

FROM THE BEST GAMING DESTINATION TO AN INNOVATIVE COCKTAIL BAR AND BREAKFAST PREPARED STRAIGHT FROM THE FARMERS' MARKET, GURGAON IS REINVENTING ITSELF AS THE NEW HIPSTER HUB. HERE'S OUR GUIDE TO THE NCR'S HOTTEST 'HOOD

By KAVYANJALI KAUSHIK, URSILA ALI AND MOHINI MEHROTRA

Best Adrenaline Rush **Flyboy Air Safari**

S

KY DIVING, PARAGLIDING, BUNGEE JUMPING ARE ACTIVITIES THAT EVERY adventurer would be well acquainted with. However, only a few would know about Air Safari, a paramotor sport that will set one's heart racing with an exhilarating journey through the clouds. Adrenaline junkies need not travel far or spend exorbitant amounts for the thrill. And people in Gurgaon don't have to look any further than the backyard of Westin Sohna.

The safari involves a simple two-seater craft that is equipped with a fan, a motor and a fabric wing. The only effort one has to make is to sit in the seat and buckle oneself to the harness; a pilot guides you through the rest. Be prepared for the vertigo to strike as the craft lifts you up to 1,500 ft in the air, propelled by the wind generated from the fan, giving a 360-degree view of the scenic landscape punctuated by the Aravallis below.

If gliding in the air doesn't set your heart racing, then the descent definitely will. The heady feeling with the loss of altitude may make you think there are chances of the flight taking a tumble, but trained pilots with their expert manoeuvres will dispel all fears. Perhaps the only regret after a whirlwind safari ride would be its fifteen minute duration that covers up to eight kilometres.

- **At** Flyboy Aviation Park, Vatika Complex, Sohna-Faridabad Road
- **Timings** 7.00 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.
- **Contact** 9871510510; info@flyboy.in





Photograph by VIKRAM SHARMA

The two-seater Flyboy
Air Safari craft



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Vikrant Misra of EGGjactly



Photograph by M ZHAZO

Finest Food Truck

EGGjactly

I GUESS THE MOVIE *CHEF* MOTIVATED AND inspired me to start a food truck," says Vikrant Misra, 34, who in February last year, along with friend Lavanika Parthy, 30, started EGGjactly, a food truck that serves Mexican, Italian and American food. The truck can be difficult to track during the day, as it is busy providing breakfast and lunch to hungry professionals in different business districts in Gurgaon. In the evening, it is found parked behind the Kingdom of Dreams where it is swarmed by customers who prefer to be served in their cars. Go for their freshly made tacos and rolls that will not only satiate your hunger but the huge quantity will keep you filled till your next meal. Or treat yourself with their waffles that come with a chocolate coating and Oreos topping.

➤ **Meal for two** Rs 500

➤ **At** Leisure Valley Road, Behind Westin Sohna, 7.00 p.m.

➤ **Contact** 9811807878

Photograph by CHANDRADEEP KUMAR

Coollest Park

Aravalli Biodiversity Park

I F YOU VISIT ARAVALLI BIODIVERSITY PARK now, you will find it hard to believe that just a decade ago, this land was barren, completely neglected and used for mining activities. The transformation, spearheaded by Delhi Development Authority and University of Delhi, has been incredible. Cradled by the Aravalli mountain range on all sides, the park, one of the most important contributor of Delhi's rich green cover, is spread across 692 acres and is home to rare species of trees and plants, 190 kinds of birds, and various insects and reptiles. A jog in the lush green cover of the park can bring you face

to face with monitor lizards, snakes, or even mammals like jackals. Besides that, various running trails take the visitors through a bat cave, butterfly garden and even a medicinal plant conservatory. Besides the longest path in the park, which serves as its main artery, four additional trails have been created along the periphery for walkers, joggers and cyclists. It also attracts a number of birdwatchers and artists, who use the 500-seater amphitheatre for various workshops and performances

➤ **At** DLF Phase 3, Sector 24, Gurgaon

➤ **Timings** 5.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m.

■ **Runners at Aravalli Biodiversity Park**





Owners Varun Puri (right) and Vivek Bhargava

Hottest Late Night Spot

Molecule Air Bar

WHEN SCIENCE MEETS ALCOHOL AND FOOD IN a setting inspired by the Second World War, Adolf Hitler's chemistry lab and the composition of atoms, you get an odd, but extremely successful, end result—Molecule Air Bar. Taking the concept of molecular gastronomy to a whole new level, Molecule is where you can savour transparent raviolis, lavash breads served in miniature military trucks spewing Nitrogen gas and molecular *puchkas* that you 'inject' with chutneys, using syringes. The presentation of each dish here is spectacular, and the taste even better. Chef Piyush Jain's dexterity in the kitchen is well-complemented by the cocktails, each of which uses the science behind molecular gastronomy to give a twist to the regulars such as Caipiroska, LIIT and margarita. Owners Manish, Varun Puri and Vivek Bhargava have also been careful enough to not forget the one thing that sets Gurgaon apart from Delhi—breweries. Molecule's brewery is set to be operational from next month and will serve premium beer, Weiss beer, roasted malt and molecule brew.

➤ **Meal and drinks for two** Rs 3,000 with taxes ➤ **At** SCO 53, 4th Floor, Sector 29, Gurgaon ➤ **Contact** 33105241

Photograph by KAVYANJALI KAUSHIK

Best Birdwatching Destination

Basai Wetlands

DESPITE BEING ONE OF THE BEST locations in the city to spot all kinds of birds, Basai Wetland is often overlooked by the average picnic crowd. Overshadowed by the nearby Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary, which takes the lion's share of the birdwatchers and general tourists, Basai is frequented only by hardcore birding enthusiasts and nature lovers. A blink-and-you-miss-it fork in the road leading up to Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary abruptly brings you to Basai, which is a beautiful expanse of marshy wilderness. At least 100 hectares is permanently under water as a result of seepage from the canal from the Gurgaon Treatment Plant. It is home to over 250 species of birds, including waders—birds commonly found on coastal shores, hence very unique if found in the city. Several species of birds, such as long-tailed shrike, marsh harrier, bar-headed goose, painted stork and grey heron, descend on the wetland throughout the year in high-concentration flocks. With only a narrow 100-metre path surrounded by the marshy land, Basai is an excellent birding destination with one of the best chances of close sighting. The lack of tall trees, flat scrub growth and flooded grassland further add to the ease of sighting.

- **At** Dhanwanpur Village, Sector 104, Gurgaon
- **Best time to visit** October to March

Birding enthusiasts at Basai Wetlands



Best Spa

Amaltas Spa

WHILE THERE IS NO DEARTH OF SPAS IN Gurgaon, what sets Amaltas Spa apart from the hordes of others is the fact that it is one of the very few high-end walk-in spas. Its USP is the use of famous L'OCCITANE products (from France) for skin therapies. A sense of calm fills you as you step into Amaltas at Anya Hotel. The sunny yellow and cream interiors beckon you to put your feet up, literally, and unwind. As soon as you enter, the spa manager greets you warmly and treats you to a wonderful herbal tea, while you decide a suitable service. Once done, the therapist leads you to one of their well-equipped rooms and shows you the products she would be using for the specific therapy. The spa offers traditional therapies, rejuvenating treatments and salon services. Opt for their Relaxing Aromachologie Massage—a combination of Swedish massage strokes, with Chinese acupressure points and long kneading Balinese movements. The well-trained therapist works on your tired muscles using a fragrant blend of pure essential oils (lavender, tea tree and geranium), which relaxes the muscles, draining away fatigue from the body. For a more holistic experience, combine the treatment with their Angelica Fountain of Glow Re-Plumping and Hydrating facial, which helps rejuvenate dull and tired-looking skin and improves skin elasticity and glow—you are bound to notice a striking different immediately after.

► **Price** Relaxing Aromachologie Massage, Rs 3,250 plus taxes and Angelica Fountain of Glow Re-Plumping and Hydrating facial, Rs 4,000 plus taxes

► **At** Anya Hotel, Sector 42, Golf Course Road, DLF Phase-5

► **Contact** 4901111

Anju Chauhan, spa manager, Amaltas



Photograph by M ZHAZO

Photograph by M ZHAZO



Aditya Arya with one of his vintage cameras

Iconic Museum

Museo Camera

FOR ANYONE WHO WANTS A LESSON IN the history of cameras and their evolution since the 19th century, a visit to photographer Aditya Arya's Museo Camera is a must. Tucked away in the basement of Arya's house in Gurgaon, the museum displays over 1,000 vintage cameras, the oldest model being a rare 1870 wooden camera. Arya began building his collection in the 1970s, while he was studying history in Delhi's St. Stephen's College. "The photographers from my generation have witnessed an incredible transformation of photography—from film to digital. We represent an important crossover and I thought it was imperative to nurture and display the dying art of analogue photography for future generations, who mostly have no idea about film and how to use it," says 55-year-old Arya, who set up the museum in 2009. Cameras of all shapes and formats, belonging to companies such as Eastman Kodak, Leica, Zeiss and Thornton Picard, occupy lines shelves, while the walls of the museum are covered with rare prints chronicling the pre-Partition era and India's freedom struggle. But the stuffed-to-the-brim space is clearly running out and Arya plans to take his venture further by setting up a museum of photography.

► **At** 23/5, DLF Phase III, Gurgaon

► **Timings** 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Saturday (appointment basis only)

► **Contact** 9810009099

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- **Price** Rs 50 onwards
- **At** DLF Cyber Hub, Cyber City, Phase 2, Nh-8
- **Contact** 02439401888

Karen Anand, founder, Gurgaon Farmers' Market



A young girl enjoying a virtual game



Photograph by M ZHAZO

Best Organic Market

Gurgaon Farmers' Market

MY PASSION HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO TRY and highlight the amazing produce that India has to offer and make it available to everyone in the country, and later to the world," says Karen Anand, 55, founder of the Gurgaon Farmers' Market. Anand, who's been working in the food industry for over 25 years, first launched her venture in Pune, introducing the city to the concept of an open-air food and lifestyle market. "When Westin Gurgaon invited us to do something similar here, I thought it was great idea," says Anand. Hosted on Sundays, the market offers independent growers an open platform to bring their produce to the table. Buyers, in turn, can shop for the best of the crop at wholesale prices. "It's a mix of a few established companies interested in testing out the market for new products as well as home bakers and small start-ups," says Anand. The market, which has two locations in Gurgaon—DLF CyberHub and The Westin—also hosts live food stations, gourmet food stalls, pop-up restaurants featuring a variety of regional cuisines and interesting cocktails, a Master Chef demo theatre, cookery workshops, food treasure hunts and live music, making it the ideal place to unwind with your entire family.

- **Contact** 9810088922; karensfarmersmarkets.in

Photograph by ABHIJIT PATIL